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J. H. 1828.

# ELEMENTS

OF

# MENTAL AND MORAL SCIENCE;

DESIGNED TO EXHIBIT THE

**Original Susceptibilities of the Mind,**

AND THE RULE

BY WHICH THE RECTITUDE OF ANY OF ITS STATES OR FEELINGS SHOULD BE JUDGED.

BY

GEORGE PAYNE, A. M.

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TO THE

REV. DAVID WELSH,

THE PERSONAL FRIEND AND ENLIGHTENED BIOGRAPHER

OF THE GREATLY LAMENTED

DR. THOMAS BROWN;

AND TO

THE REV. THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D.

THE ELOQUENT ADVOCATE OF MEASURES

DESIGNED TO EVINCE

THE HIGH REGARD WHICH IS CHERISHED FOR THE MEMORY OF

DR. BROWN;

*THIS VOLUME,*

WHICH EXHIBITS MANY OF THE LEADING DOCTRINES

OF THAT DISTINGUISHED WRITER,

IS INSCRIBED,

WITH GREAT ESTEEM AND AFFECTION,

BY

THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

G. PAYNE.

# PREFACE.

THE subsequent pages owe their origin to the professional engagements of the writer. Expected to impart instruction to the students committed to his care, in the philosophy of the human mind, as well as on subjects strictly theological, he devoted all the time he could command to the task of drawing up a course of lectures on the Elements of Mental and Moral Science, which should be made to combine, as far as he found it practicable, comprehension with brevity, and might be used as a text book in his future prelections.

His object in the preparation of his lectures was not originality, but usefulness. His sole desire was to guide the minds of his pupils to what he regarded as the right decision upon the multifarious topics of inquiry which his plan embraced; and whether he attained that end by presenting to them the statements of others, or what might be more properly denominated his own, was to him a matter of no importance whatever.

In the prosecution of this object, the quotations made from the works both of living and departed

genius were of course numerous. In short, it appeared to him that to present to his young friends a statement of the sentiments of our most approved writers in relation to the important subjects to which he directed their attention, combined with an effort to guide them to the truth amidst this conflict of opinions, would prove one of the best modes he could adopt for securing a competent acquaintance with those subjects; nor when he afterwards proceeded to prepare his manuscript for the press, did he see reason to adopt a different course of proceeding.

The preceding statement will account for the free use which he has made, in the following pages, of the writings of those illustrious men to whom the friends of mental science are under such deep obligations. He ventures to state, however, that the present work is not a mere compilation. He has endeavoured at least to think for himself; and though he has mainly adopted the views and the system of the late Dr. T. Brown, the attentive reader will perceive that he differs from that writer on several important points—whether justly so or not, must of course be left for the public to decide; the difference will at any rate shew that he does not slavishly follow any leader, nor consent to hold his mind in bondage to any man.

Unless the reader should be familiarly acquainted with the writings of Locke, Reid, Stewart, Brown, Welsh, &c., it is presumed that he will deem it a

great advantage to be presented with an account of the views of these illustrious men; he will thus be put in possession of better and more ample means for forming an enlightened judgment for himself, than if the sentiments of the writer had been singly exhibited. And even many who are tolerably conversant with the subjects on which this volume treats, may be glad to have their memories refreshed, and to be spared the labour of making references—a trouble which they must otherwise have undergone: while all who may honour this Work, by taking it as their guide in the commencement of their studies, will, it is hoped, be better prepared, in consequence of the plan which it adopts, for an extensive course of reading, to which it is designed to invite and allure them.

The Author wishes to add a few words in reference to the system which, as it has been already intimated, is mainly followed in the present Work, *viz.* that of Dr. Thomas Brown, late Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh;—a system which differs very considerably from the one which is still advocated with so much ability by his predecessor, Mr. Dugald Stewart. The sentiments of this latter gentleman are avowedly formed upon those of his preceptor, Dr. Reid; yet he has presented the same radical principles in so much more elegant a dress—has adorned his pages with such varied and beautiful illustration—and maintained so high a tone of moral eloquence, that his writings, although it should be admitted that they

have not perhaps very greatly enlarged the boundaries of Mental Science, have gained for their Author a larger measure of public applause, than has been bestowed upon those even of his more original predecessor.

The works of these distinguished men formed an epoch in the history of Mental Science, second only in importance and splendour to that which had been introduced by the labours of our immortal Locke. Yet, without intending to detract from their great merits, the present Writer ventures to predict that the time is not far distant, when the publication of Dr. Brown's Lectures will be regarded as constituting an era not less brilliant than any of the preceding ones. The public have not as yet been just to the great merits of the latter gentleman. Many circumstances, which it is unnecessary to specify, have operated to prevent his attainment of that unrivalled distinction as a metaphysician, to which "his transcendent genius, blending together," as it did, "all that is most graceful in fancy, with all that is most arduous and recondite in original speculation," most justly entitles him. There is one point only to which the Author of these pages would refer. He was a poet, and, therefore, as it has been too hastily inferred, he cannot have been a solid and judicious philosopher. Now if it were admitted that a brilliant imagination is not, generally speaking, found in union with those powers which qualify an individual for abstract speculation and "patient thought," it might still be maintained

that Dr. Brown was an exception. In his writings "the lighter graces of poetry are interspersed amongst the demonstrations of a profound and original metaphysics. Never was philosophy so abstruse, yet never was it seasoned so exquisitely, or spread over a page so rich in all those attic delicacies of the imagination and the style, which could make the study of it attractive."* It ought also to be further observed, that the poetry, which is doubtless to be found in Dr. Brown's philosophical works, is not only exquisite in itself, but invariably subordinated to the reasoning. His imagination is yoked to his argument, and it is only for the purpose of carrying *it* forwards with greater rapidity and power that he ever gives to the former the reins. In short, that splendour of fancy which sometimes, it must be confessed, eclipses thought, serves, in Dr. Brown, as it always should do, to set it in the clearness of noon-day before the view of the reader.

Were it as certain, that the man who is not a poet must be a metaphysician, as that Dr. Brown possessed, in an eminent degree, the higher qualities of both, the writer of the present work might venture, on that ground, to prefer some claim to the character of a Mental Philosopher. No one can be more fully aware, than he is himself, how impossible it is for him to shed over his work those graces of style which give to the pages of

* *Vide* Prospectus for a Monument to the memory of Dr. Brown, by one of the most eloquent writers of the present day.

Dr. Brown so irresistible an attraction. He has not, accordingly, been guilty of the folly of attempting it. His sole effort has been to render the principles he advocates as intelligible as the abstract nature of the subjects would allow. He has aimed only at correctness and perspicuity—to think with accuracy and clearness himself, and to convey to his readers a distinct conception of his meaning. He ventures not to say, nor even to imagine, that he has been uniformly successful. In a volume comprehending so wide a variety of topics, each of them requiring for its full elucidation considerable power of abstract thought, it were presumption to conceive that there are no mistakes of doctrine as well as of phraseology; and he expects to derive much instruction from the friendly remarks (for he will not anticipate any of a different description) of the various critics who may honour his work with their notice. He trusts, however, that it will not be entirely useless. He can with truth say, that his object in thus venturing to appear at the bar of the public, has been to advance the interests of what he acknowledges is to him a favourite science. He regards that science as being even yet in a state of infancy; and when succeeding writers shall have carried it, as they doubtless will, to a higher point of advancement than that to which it has at present attained, he trusts that, though he may be constrained by their labours to relinquish some of his present sentiments, he shall not be the last to offer them his thanks.

In committing this volume to the press, the Author has had more immediately in view the benefit of his junior brethren in the ministry; and of that large body of British youths whom the advancing spirit of the age will compel to devote some attention to the subjects on which it treats, and who may feel their need of some such assistance as the present Work attempts to supply. At the same time it has not received any such peculiar adaptation to either of these classes as to render it, on that account, less fit for circulation beyond the boundary of the circle just referred to. The connexion between some of the doctrines of Mental Science, and various parts of Theological Truth, has indeed been exhibited; and it is hoped that this circumstance will not render the volume less acceptable to those whose religious opinions are in harmony with the sentiments of the Writer. Yet he is not aware that his Theology has influenced his philosophical opinions. He rests the views he entertains concerning the nature and properties of the human mind, upon the ground on which he believes in the ductility, &c. &c. of gold—on the ground, that is, of observation alone. He has endeavoured to examine the substance *mind*, as we examine the substance *gold;* and he has ascribed no properties to it but such as in this manner he found, or, at least, fancied he found it to possess. He has certainly rejoiced to see that what he regards as the true principles of Mental Science, are in union with those views of revealed truth, which appear to him of great and paramount

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Blackburn Academy, 1828.

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Dr. Brown so irresistible an attraction. He has not, accordingly, been guilty of the folly of attempting it. His sole effort has been to render the principles he advocates as intelligible as the abstract nature of the subjects would allow. He has aimed only at correctness and perspicuity—to think with accuracy and clearness himself, and to convey to his readers a distinct conception of his meaning. He ventures not to say, nor even to imagine, that he has been uniformly successful. In a volume comprehending so wide a variety of topics, each of them requiring for its full elucidation considerable power of abstract thought, it were presumption to conceive that there are no mistakes of doctrine as well as of phraseology; and he expects to derive much instruction from the friendly remarks (for he will not anticipate any of a different description) of the various critics who may honour his work with their notice. He trusts, however, that it will not be entirely useless. He can with truth say, that his object in thus venturing to appear at the bar of the public, has been to advance the interests of what he acknowledges is to him a favourite science. He regards that science as being even yet in a state of infancy; and when succeeding writers shall have carried it, as they doubtless will, to a higher point of advancement than that to which it has at present attained, he trusts that, though he may be constrained by their labours to relinquish some of his present sentiments, he shall not be the last to offer them his thanks.

In committing this volume to the press, the Author has had more immediately in view the benefit of his junior brethren in the ministry; and of that large body of British youths whom the advancing spirit of the age will compel to devote some attention to the subjects on which it treats, and who may feel their need of some such assistance as the present Work attempts to supply. At the same time it has not received any such peculiar adaptation to either of these classes as to render it, on that account, less fit for circulation beyond the boundary of the circle just referred to. The connexion between some of the doctrines of Mental Science, and various parts of Theological Truth, has indeed been exhibited; and it is hoped that this circumstance will not render the volume less acceptable to those whose religious opinions are in harmony with the sentiments of the Writer. Yet he is not aware that his Theology has influenced his philosophical opinions. He rests the views he entertains concerning the nature and properties of the human mind, upon the ground on which he believes in the ductility, &c. &c. of gold—on the ground, that is, of observation alone. He has endeavoured to examine the substance *mind*, as we examine the substance *gold;* and he has ascribed no properties to it but such as in this manner he found, or, at least, fancied he found it to possess. He has certainly rejoiced to see that what he regards as the true principles of Mental Science, are in union with those views of revealed truth, which appear to him of great and paramount

importance; his faith in both has been confirmed by the discovery of the alliance. Yet it would be to do injustice to the Work to suppose that it attempts to found a system of Mental Philosophy on any peculiar religious opinions. It is conducted on philosophical principles; and it respectfully invites the candid attention of the man of science, as well as of the friend of religion.

A regard to brevity has prevented the Author's enlarging on some points upon which he wished to enter more fully. He deemed it, on various accounts, inexpedient that the work should extend beyond one volume. Should it happen to obtain so much favour from the public as to render a second edition necessary, he has it in contemplation to expand considerably that part which treats on Moral Science, or rather to introduce additional topics and discussions; and either to abridge the former part, or to add another volume, as circumstances and the advice of friends may seem to direct. In its present form he solicits for it the kind consideration of his friends, and the candid attention of an enlightened public.

Blackburn Academy, 1828.

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# ELEMENTS

OF

# MENTAL AND MORAL SCIENCE.

## CHAP. I.

### INTRODUCTION.

"THE whole system of bodies in the universe," as it has been very justly stated, "may be called the Material world; the whole system of minds, from the infinite Creator, to the meanest creature endowed with thought, may be called the Intellectual world."

Such being the case, the subject of all philosophical inquiries must be either Matter, or Mind. To investigate the properties of the former, is the object of Physical Science; to develop the nature and operations of the latter, belongs to the department of Metaphysics, or Mental Philosophy.

It is true that, as the mind is not thought or feeling, but THAT which thinks and feels, all our speculations with regard to mind belong to the general department of Physics. We do not, however, regret this arbitrary separation of the philosophy of Mind from that of Matter. It leads to a division of literary labour, favourable to the advancement of both.

Confining our observation to this world, the mind of man must be allowed to be the noblest production of Almighty power; it deserves, therefore, our closest study. It must, however, be admitted, that an investigation of the nature and properties of Mind, is not unattended with difficulty; and that it may be conducted in a manner little calculated to yield much valuable fruit. To these two causes we may, perhaps, chiefly trace that absurd prejudice against all inquiries of this nature, which prevails—we lament the necessity of admitting—to a considerable extent, even in the present day. The prejudice is properly designated absurd, for Mr. Hume long ago observed, that "all the sciences have a relation to human nature." It is manifest, indeed, that the mind is the instrument which is employed in every disquisition into which we enter; the measure of success which attends our application of this instrument must, accordingly, depend, in some degree at any rate, upon the perfection of our knowledge of its nature. The importance, however, of Mental Science is not a subject to be thus cursorily dismissed; the subsequent part of this chapter will, therefore, be devoted to a more full development of that importance.

A writer of powerful talents,* has endeavoured to depreciate all investigations of this kind by statements of which the following is the substance. Matter and Mind present distinct phænomena, of which *the former* may be the subject of actual experiment, the *latter* only of observation. By experiments in physics, the nature of any substance may be so ascertained, as to enable us to manage it at pleasure. With regard to mind, the case, it is alleged, is different.

* *Vide* Edinburgh Review, Vol. III. p. 269.

Here we can do no more than *observe* the phænomena; their order and succession are beyond our control. We may examine them minutely; we may describe them accurately; but, as we cannot subject them to experiment, we obtain no more power over them. "In metaphysics certainly," he adds, "knowledge is not power; instead of producing new phænomena to elucidate the old, by well-contrived and well-conducted experiments, the most diligent inquirer can do no more than register and arrange the appearances, which he can neither account for, nor control."

Mr. Stewart admits the premises of this writer, without acquiescing in his conclusion; because, as he states, "the difference between experiment and observation consists merely in the comparative rapidity with which they accomplish their discoveries; or rather," he adds, "in the comparative command we possess over them, as instruments for the investigation of truth. The discoveries of both, when actually effected, are so precisely of the same kind, that it may safely be affirmed, there is not a single proposition true of the one, which will not be found to hold equally with respect to the other."*

A little consideration may, perhaps, serve to convince us, that Mr. Stewart has admitted more than he needed to have done,—that the distinction of the objector is a distinction without a difference: for the business of the philosopher is observation, and observation alone. He is to watch how the processes of nature (the term nature is used here to prevent circumlocution) are carried on in the departments both of matter, and of mind. It is possible, indeed, to

* Philosophical Essays, pp. 33, 34.

secure, by a little effort on our part, a more frequent recurrence of some of these processes than would otherwise take place. Instead of watching, for instance, for the accidental fall of a stone from a certain eminence, in order to ascertain at what rate the velocity of falling bodies is accelerated, we may cause it to be frequently thrown from that eminence, and thus gain, in considerably less time, the desired information; but still there is nothing more than observation here. The stone is brought to the ground, in each case, by the laws of nature (to adopt popular phraseology); its motion is accelerated, in each case, by the same laws; and we watch the process of descent, that we may ascertain the law of acceleration.

Should it be said that the essence of the experiment consists in giving the motion to the stone, and not in the notice we take of the manner and velocity of its descent, it will be easy to reply, that we may, in a similar manner, make experiments upon mind. We may set Mind in action as well as Matter; and to every attempt to discover the laws of Mind, by originating any mental process, either in our own bosoms, or in the bosoms of others, the name of experiment may be given with as much propriety as to any trial in the department of physics.

And if mind can be thus subjected to trial, or even to observation only, in the sense of the objector, so that the general laws which guide its operations may be ascertained, why should it be said that knowledge, in the philosophy of mind, is not power? Why may not a knowledge of general laws be turned to a good practical account, in the one case, as well as in the other? The assertions of the Reviewer are at direct variance with the facts of the case. "What," says Mr. Stewart," is the whole business of education, when

systematically and judiciously conducted, but a practical application of rules, deduced from our own experiments, or from those of others, on the most effectual modes of developing and of cultivating the intellectual faculties and the moral principles?" He adds, with great truth, "that education would be more systematic and enlightened, if the powers and faculties on which it operates were more scientifically examined, and better understood." These remarks may be sufficient to shew that the objection to which reference has been made, ought not to prevent our entrance into the temple of Mental Science. To this entrance many considerations invite us.

1. The important influence of Mind, and a knowledge of Mind, upon physical science in general. Science is *the comparison of phænomena,* and the *discovery of their agreement* or *disagreement,*—or the *order of their succession.* All science is, then, as Dr. Brown very justly states, *in the mind;* for it is the mind which perceives, arranges, judges, reasons, &c.; and these perceptions, classifications, and reasonings, which are purely mental phænomena, constitute science. There might, accordingly, be *objects* of science without mind, but not science itself; and since all science is in the mind, and must, consequently, derive its character from the nature and susceptibilities of the mind, it is manifest that the constitution of the latter could undergo no material change, without effecting an entire alteration in the aspect of all physical science.*

But though this should be conceded, it might still be objected, that the admission does not prove the necessity of possessing any *knowledge* of the mind;—

* *Vide* Brown's Lectures, Vol. I. p. 17—26.

that men may make great progress in physical science, who pay no attention to intellectual philosophy. We reply, that unless they conduct their investigations according to rules which nothing but a knowledge of mind can supply, the hope of a satisfactory result must be groundless. The history of the world establishes, beyond all question, the truth of the above statement. To what is it to be ascribed, that physical science, previous to the time of Bacon, presented so meagre and dwarfish an appearance? Were there, amongst its votaries, no men of ardour and genius? This will not be pretended. The truth is, that some of them possessed transcendent talent; but their profound ignorance of the human mind impelled them to a blind activity more mischievous than idleness itself. "It is not," says Dr. Brown, "the waste of intellect, as it lies torpid in the great multitude of our race, that is alone to be regretted in relation to science, which, in better circumstances, it might improve and adorn. It is, in many cases, the very industry of intellect, busily exerted, but exerted in labours that must be profitless, because the objects, to which the labour is directed, are beyond the reach of man."*

"It is of great use to the sailor," says Mr. Locke, "to know the length of his line, though he cannot with it fathom all the depths of the ocean." The Anti-Baconian philosophers did not know the length of their line. They had not properly surveyed the powers of their minds; and the misdirected "industry of intellect" carried *them* into fields of investigation, from whence nothing which promised any benefit to mankind could possibly be gathered. Nor was

* Vol. I. p. 43.

it till Bacon had introduced juster principles of physical inquiry—principles which were the result of more correct views of the nature, faculties, and laws of the mind—that physical science commenced that splendid career of improvement which has equally astonished and delighted mankind. In looking "to those rules of physical investigation which he has given us, we are too apt," says Dr. Brown, "to think of the erroneous physical opinions which preceded them, without paying sufficient attention to the false theories of intellect which had led to those very physical absurdities."—"We must not forget that the temple which he purified, was not the temple of external nature, but the temple of the mind,—that in *its* inmost sanctuaries were all the idols which he overthrew,—and that it was not till these were removed, and the intellect prepared for the presence of a nobler divinity, that Truth would deign to unveil herself to adoration:—as in the mysteries of those eastern religions, in which the first ceremony for admission to the worship of the God, is the purification of the worshipper."*

2. Consider the important aid which an intimate acquaintance with the nature and powers of the mind, may be made to afford to those arts in which mind is the subject of direct operation. Such are the arts of Education, Poetry, Eloquence, Criticism, &c. &c. The object at which they aim is to originate certain habits, or trains of thought, and to awaken various feelings of pleasure, transport, enthusiasm, anger, fear, sympathy, &c., to kindle them into momentary or permanent existence, as the circumstances of the case may require. Now if it be the

* Vol. I. pp. 28, 29.

fact, that our thoughts and feelings are united in the relation of cause and effect, and, consequently, follow one another in a certain train, how can it be doubted that the teacher, the poet, the orator, &c. must be acquainted with the order of their succession, before he can cherish any rational hope of effecting the object he has in view? Ignorant of this, he might strengthen propensities and habits (as is too frequently done by empyrics in education) which he desired to subdue; and rouse, into fearful and resistless energy, passions which, as he imagined, he was taking the most prudent measures to allay.

Should it be said, that the order of the successions of human thought and feeling is as perfectly known to the peasant as to the most profound philosopher, so that the study of Mental Philosophy is unnecessary, it may be replied, *first*, that the assertion is not true; the more obvious, and ordinary, and every day successions, being all that are known to the great body of mankind;* and, secondly, that if it were true, it would not detract from the value of intellectual philosophy, but prove merely that the very men who urge the objection, possess more of this philosophy, and are more deeply indebted to it, than they have the good sense and gratitude to acknowledge.

3. Consider the important bearing of the Philosophy of Mind upon moral science and theological investigations. It is the assertion of a very judicious writer, that "a man might as reasonably entitle himself a learned physician, though he had never studied anatomy, as esteem himself an adept in moral science, without having obtained an intimate acquaint-

* *Vide* Stewart, Vol. I. pp. 282, 283.

ance with the affections, passions, and sentiments of the human heart." Mental Philosophy is the anatomy of human nature: is it possible, then, to exhibit the rationale of Morals, if we are ignorant of this species of anatomy? The rectitude of moral precepts depends upon the powers and susceptibilities of those to whom they are addressed. There must be a harmony and correspondence between what is required from moral agents, and what is given to them; and without an intimate acquaintance with the latter, this correspondence must be, in a considerable degree at least, veiled from our view.

One branch of mental philosophy relates to those states of mind which constitute, when they exist in certain circumstances, our moral affections; such as—Hatred, Love, Gratitude, Anger, Desire, &c. To possess an intimate acquaintance with the nature, causes, and results of these emotions, must be of incalculable importance to the Christian moralist. They are the springs of human conduct. To be able to touch them requires obviously a knowledge of the manner in which they arise; and one of the main causes to which is to be ascribed the power which one mind frequently exercises over others, bending and directing them at its will, is the superior acquaintance of its possessor with the order of succession of human thought and feeling, and his consequent higher capability of originating that train, which will ultimately lead to the accomplishment of his own purposes. "It is principally on this account," says an excellent writer, "that almost all the best practical writers on religion have been mental philosophers. They are not satisfied to shew what is the meaning, or what the extent, of any precept; but they endeavour to trace the avenues by which it may be conducted to

the recesses of the heart, and to detect the principles of our own nature to which it has the nearest alliance, or from which the most obstinate hostility may be expected. And, on the other hand, it is, in part at least, from ignorance of the mental constitution, that many persons deceive themselves in many things of great practical importance; are insensible to the growth of the most dangerous associations; mistake the real sources of their errors in conduct; confound the more amiable natural dispositions with the evidences and fruits of sanctification; or remain insensible to dormant principles of sin, which they might have discovered and mortified, till a powerful temptation draws them forth to a terrible and fatal activity."

And who can doubt the important aid which an accurate acquaintance with the nature and faculties of the mind will afford to the theological student? The reference here is not so much to the precision of thought and statement which the study of intellectual science cannot fail to produce, though its value even in this point of view can scarcely be too highly appreciated; but to many interesting and important questions in theology, in reference to which it is not too much to affirm, that no man who has not paid considerable attention to intellectual science, can form an enlightened judgment. The subjects of Free Agency, Predestination, &c. will immediately occur to the mind of the reader. Their intimate connexion with mental science must be obvious to all; a necessary regard to brevity forbids any thing more than this bare reference to them.

4. Reflect upon the powerful tendency of intellectual philosophy to discipline and strengthen the mind. The design of education is not so much to

impart information, as to give tone and vigour to the mental powers—to form the understanding to habits of thought at once "bold and cautious, patient and discursive," comprehensive and profound. To effect this purpose, "those sciences in which the evidence is only probable, possess manifest advantages over those in which it is demonstrative." The evidence which the mathematician requires, and without which he will not, in his department of science, admit the truth of any proposition, can not be obtained as the guide of our conduct, even in cases of great moment, and requiring prompt decision. It is on moral evidence that we must act in all the relations we sustain both to God and to each other. Now if the constant habit of requiring and obtaining demonstrative evidence should not produce a sceptical bias in the mind of the mathematician, which Mr. Stewart denies, it must, we should think, infallibly render him less competent to judge in cases when the only evidence to direct him is that with which he is less conversant and familiar—it must, in a measure, unfit him to decide on probable evidence, and where probability, as is sometimes the case, opposes probability. The studies to which the attention of the reader is directed, in this work, are the best guides here. They tend more eminently than any others "to form reflective habits of mind; for reflection is necessary for observing the phænomena on which we are to reason; it is requisite for comparing, combining, and separating them; it is requisite ultimately for ascertaining the laws to which they are subjected."

5. To all this it may be added, that while other sciences require a considerable apparatus of books, &c. and opportunities of general information, the mental philosopher carries the materials of his art

constantly about with him. They are perpetually present, and ready for his use; "*pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur;*—and the most vulgar incidents in life, which only distract the thoughts of other speculators, furnish to him not unfrequently occasions for examining anew the principles he has established, and supply hints for their enlargement, illustration, or correction."

## CHAP. II.

### THE OBJECT OF INTELLECTUAL SCIENCE; AND THE MODE IN WHICH OUR INQUIRIES SHOULD BE CONDUCTED.

We give the name of Mind to that mysterious principle within us, which constitutes "the permanent subject" of various phænomena, or properties, differing essentially from those which matter exhibits. Matter is that which is extended, divisible, impenetrable, &c.; Mind is that which perceives, remembers, compares, judges, &c. Now the reader is especially requested to observe, that the object of the present inquiry is to ascertain what are the phænomena, or properties, or qualities of mind, and not what is the essence of mind. Indeed, of the essence both of matter and of mind, we are profoundly ignorant. We know that matter is extended, &c. &c.;—that mind perceives, &c. &c.—*i. e.* we know the properties of each. We know, at least, some of the various ways in which matter affects us—some of the various states in which mind may exist. But this is not to know the essence of either; it is to know them both, not absolutely, but relatively only.

There is no difference of opinion among our best philosophers on this point. "The essence both of body, and of mind," says Dr. Reid, "is unknown to us.

We know certain properties of the first, and certain operations of the last, and by those *only* we can define or describe them."* "If I am asked," adds Mr. Stewart, "what I mean by Matter? I can only explain myself by saying, it is that which is extended, figured, coloured, &c. &c.; *i. e.* I can define it in no other way than by enumerating its sensible qualities. It is not matter, or body, which I perceive by my senses; but only extension, figure, colour, and certain other qualities, which the constitution of my nature leads me to refer to something which is extended, figured, and coloured. The case is precisely similar with respect to Mind. We are not immediately conscious of its existence, but we are conscious of sensation, thought, and volition; operations which imply the existence of something which feels, thinks, and wills."† "In this respect," states Dr. Brown, "the philosophy of matter and of mind completely agree—that in both equally our knowledge is confined to the phænomena which they exhibit."—"What matter is independent of our perception we know not."—"If our knowledge of matter be relative only, our knowledge of mind is equally so. We know it only as susceptible of feelings that have already existed, &c."‡ "That we know nothing more of the mind," says the Rev. Mr. Welsh, "than that, from the time of our birth till the present moment, it has existed in certain states of thought and feeling, is a position so very obvious, that I can scarcely conceive it to be disputed."§

Our inquiries are then to be limited to the phænomena, or properties of mind. To prevent the possibility of mistake, on the part of those who

* Reid's Essays, Vol. I. p. 26. † Elements, Vol. I. p. 3. 8vo.
‡ Vol. I. p. 198—195, & 206. § Memoirs of Brown, p. 214.

have not made mental science the subject of their inquiries, it may be well to state distinctly,

First, that it is by no means intended to intimate a doubt with reference to the existence of mind. The sceptical philosopher maintains, that our successive thoughts and feelings constitute mind itself; and that the qualities of hardness, colour, form, weight, divisibility, &c. constitute matter. With the single exception of seriously attempting to refute a dogma so extravagant as this, it is scarcely possible to conceive of a greater absurdity. The preceding statements, while they abandon all intention of inquiring into the essence of mind, take for granted its existence, by exhibiting it as the permanent subject of certain varying phænomena of which we are conscious.

Nor, secondly, is it intended to intimate that there may be no essential difference between the essence of matter and of mind; for all the speculations of intellectual science take it for granted that such a difference exists, and, on the supposition of there being none, would be perfectly absurd. We inquire, at one time, into the qualities of the substance *matter;* we inquire, at another time, into the qualities of the substance *mind,* (the term substance, in reference to the mind, is used to avoid circumlocution) as contradistinguished from those of matter: but if the essence of matter and mind be not essentially different, the subject of our inquiries is, in both cases, the same. Though it must, accordingly, be confessed to be unphilosophical to speculate concerning the *positive* essence of the mind, it is not unphilosophical to attempt to shew that that essence is not *material.* The importance, not to say necessity, of doing this, is greater, we conceive, than Mr. Stewart, or even Dr. Brown,

seems disposed to allow. The former indeed says, that "the conclusions to which we are led, by a careful examination of the phænomena which mind exhibits, have no necessary connexion with our opinions concerning its nature."* This statement is surely not correct. Are we not in the constant habit of contending that the complexity, which we cannot but ascribe to the mental phænomena, cannot be similar to that which is produced by the union of two or more substances, so as to form one physical whole, *because* the mind is a simple indivisible essence? Do we not *assume* the indivisibility of the mind, in many of our speculations? And have we any right to do this, without previously proving the immateriality of mind, *i. e.* that its essence, though unknown, is different from that of matter?

Into an extended argument on this subject my limits will not permit me to go: it must be sufficient to glance at the proof which may be adduced. Two distinct classes of phænomena, viz. extension, divisibility, gravity, form, colour, attraction, repulsion, &c.; and perception, memory, reasoning, joy, grief, &c., become known to us, in radically different ways; the one, through the medium of the external senses—the other, by consciousness. Are these phænomena the qualities of the same substance? Is it reasonable to suppose that properties so opposite to each other, the knowledge of which is obtained in so different a manner, inhere in the same permanent subject? If the qualities are thus essentially different, must not the essence be essentially different? The argument is, however, yet but partially developed. Some of these qualities are incompatible with each other, so

* Vol. I. p. 7.

that like length and shortness, when the comparison is with the same objects, they cannot possibly be the qualities of the same substance. Sensation and thought belong to one of the classes of properties which have been specified; divisibility is included in the other. If sensation and thought were properties of matter, they must be divisible, because matter is divisible; every separate particle of the thinking and feeling whole, must possess a separate portion of sensation and thought; as every separate particle possesses the power of attraction. But sensation and thought are not divisible, consciousness being judge; the permanent subject, therefore, of these qualities, *whatever be its positive nature,* is certainly not material.

The Mind then is to be regarded as a substance endowed with certain properties, susceptible of various affections or modifications, which, existing successively as momentary states of the mind, constitute all the phænomena of thought and feeling: our object is to ascertain what these properties, powers, and susceptibilities of the mind are. How then is this to be done? The answer shall be given in the following admirable statement by Dr. Brown:—"We must inquire into the properties of the substance Mind, in the same way as we ascertain the properties of the substance Matter. As we say of gold, that it is that which is of a certain specific weight, yellow, ductile, fusible at a certain temperature, and capable of certain combinations, because all these properties have been observed by ourselves or others; so we say of the Mind, that it is that which perceives, remembers, compares, and is susceptible of various emotions, or other feelings; because of all those we have been conscious, or have observed them indirectly in others.

We are not entitled to state with confidence any quality as a property of gold, which we do not remember to have observed ourselves, or to have received on the faith of the observation of others, whose authority we have reason to consider as indubitable; and as little are we entitled to assert any quality, or general susceptibility, as belonging to the human mind, of which we have not been conscious ourselves in the feelings resulting from it, or for which we have not the authority of the indubitable consciousness of others."* And again: "Let it then never be forgotten, that the powers and operations of the mind can only be ascertained by a careful observation of the mind itself; and that we might as well attempt to discover by logic, unaided by observation and experiment, the various coloured rays that enter into the composition of a sun-beam, as to discover, by dialectic subtilties, *à priori*, the various feelings that enter into a single thought or passion."†

The preceding statements exhibit the Baconian method of investigation, in its application to Mind. It is truly wonderful, as well as melancholy, that so many centuries should have rolled away before it was distinctly perceived, that the properties and laws of Mind can be ascertained by observation and induction alone. In the employment of this method, it is however necessary to remember, that it affords us no light with reference to the *rectitude* of our particular affections and conduct. We discover by it, how we are capable, by the constitution of the mind, of feeling and acting; but not whether thus feeling and thus acting in any particular case, we should feel and act rightly. In one respect, indeed, the knowledge of

* Vol. I. p. 85. † P. 7.

what *is*, is identical with the knowledge of what *ought to be* in man. The physical constitution of the mind is what it should be, because it is what God made it. When, therefore, we have ascertained, by the inductive process, what are the natural susceptibilities of the human mind, its various capabilities of feeling, we know what man should be in this point of view. But susceptibilities, or capabilities of feeling, &c. are to be distinguished from actual feelings. A being who is susceptible of the angry emotions, unless he be a perfect moral agent, may be improperly angry. "When, therefore," says Dr. Brown, "we know that man has certain affections and passions, there still remains the great inquiry, as to the propriety or impropriety of those passions, and of the conduct to which they lead. We have to consider, not merely *how* he is capable of acting, but also whether, acting in the manner supposed, he would be fulfilling a duty or perpetrating a crime."*

Our inquiry, then, regards the phænomena of Mind only; and we are to depend, not upon hypothesis, but observation, for all the knowledge that is to be obtained upon the subject. With reference then to the phænomena of Mind, "What are the particular points to be examined?" This is an inquiry of great practical importance. Had more attention been paid to it by preceding philosophers, the science of mind would have made more rapid progress. Dr. Brown brings it prominently into view; and it is to be ascribed, partly at least, to the circumstance of his having kept this definite and proper object of inquiry so steadily before him, that his investigations have been attended with such splendid

* Vol. I. p. 9. Introduction.

success. The phænomena of mind consist of certain thoughts and feelings, or, to use a single word, comprehending both, of certain states. Now the only questions which can be instituted here are the two following:—"What is the order in which they arise?" and, "What are the elements of which they consist?" Leaving out of our consideration, for the present, the moral character of our various states of mind, (an inquiry which will be entered upon at the proper time and place), it is imagined that the questions just mentioned comprise every topic of investigation in relation to Mind.

Dr. Brown illustrates this two-fold object of intellectual science by its analogy to the objects of natural science. All physical inquiry is directed to ascertain either the *composition* of bodies, or their *powers* and *susceptibilities;* in other words, the *elementary* bodies which are to be found in any *aggregate* before us; or the manner in which these aggregates affect other substances, and are affected by them in return, *i.e.* the changes which they produce or suffer. All the phænomena of the material world consist of changes. Take, for example, the phænomenon of the solution of glass in the fluoric acid. What is this but a change in the state of the glass—a change from solidity to fluidity? These changes can only be ascertained by observation; and the changes which one body *produces* upon all others, indicate its powers—the changes which it *suffers* from the action of others, its susceptibilities.

The ingenious and excellent biographer of Dr. Brown, has made some very just remarks upon his statement in reference to the composition of bodies. They evidently proceed, he thinks, upon the admission of the corpuscular hypothesis of Boscovich;

which, however ingenious and beautiful, is, as yet, only an hypothesis. He says, in substance at least, that it is impossible for us to discover the constituent elements of bodies, if such elements exist; and that, even if we could, our knowledge of them would be only relative; we could learn nothing more concerning them, than the changes they would produce or suffer; so that the two inquiries of Dr. Brown "may, in chemical science, be resolved into one: our sole object being, not to ascertain the original atoms that compose any body, but the changes which the body will undergo, or occasion, in new circumstances."*

Taking the term element, however, not in the technical sense of Boscovich, but in the manner in which it is ordinarily used by chemists, viz. to denote those substances which appear to be simple, or uncompounded, (and it is not certain to me that Dr. Brown did not intend it to be understood in this sense,) it *is* manifestly the object of physical science to ascertain the elements, as well as the powers and susceptibilities of bodies. But how then can the objects of Physical, illustrate those of Intellectual, Science? Do our thoughts and feelings, or states of mind, stand in need of analysis, like manifestly compound physical substances? or do they even admit of any such analysis? Do they stand in the relation of cause and effect to each other,—one thought introducing another thought, and one feeling another feeling, as certain effects always result from certain causes in the world of nature? If this be the case, it is manifest that the preceding remarks concerning the object of physical science, may be

* Welsh's Memoirs, p. 206.

transferred to our inquiries relative to Mind. Of this, then, there can be no doubt.

*The phænomena of mind, like the phænomena of matter, follow each other in a regular order of succession, and are, consequently, capable of arrangement as causes and effects.* One great object of intellectual science is, then, to ascertain the laws of succession, without which such an arrangement cannot be effected. We need not say any thing in support of the alleged fact, that a certain order is preserved in the succession of human thought and feeling; no one will deny it. It is, however, necessary for the reader particularly to observe, that all our knowledge of the laws of succession is derived from experience. This, if he has not been accustomed to speculations of this kind, he may find it a little difficult to conceive. There are some thoughts and feelings, which seem so naturally, and even necessarily, to result from other thoughts and feelings, that we are apt to imagine we should have been able to predict their sequence, independently of experience. Their *apparent* inseparable union is, however, the mere consequence of our having invariably found them together. The mind was doubtless so formed by its Maker, as that the present order of succession of thought and feeling should take place; and, perhaps, we are warranted in saying, that while the present constitution of the mind remains, a different order of succession is impossible. But that constitution was an arbitrary one. The mind might have been formed with other and different susceptibilities; and its states might have followed each other in a radically different order. Nothing, then, can manifestly be known of mind—of its phænomena—of their relation to each other, as cause and effect, but as the result of actual obser-

vation. To suppose the contrary, is as absurd as to imagine that we might have predicted the properties of gold without examination; or that we might have described the nature of a machine, which depended entirely upon the arbitrary will of its inventor for its form, size, &c., without an actual inspection of it. "There is nothing," says Dr. Brown, "in any one state of mind, considered in itself, which necessarily involves the succession of any other state of mind. That particular state, for example, which constitutes the mere feeling of pain, instead of being attended by that different state which constitutes the desire of being freed from pain, might have continued as one uniform feeling, or might have ceased, and been succeeded by some other state, though, in the original adaptation of our mental powers, by that Creator's wisdom which planned the sequences of its phænomena, the particular affection that constitutes desire had not been one of the innumerable varieties of affection of which the mind was for ever to be susceptible."—"We are always too much inclined to believe, that we know what must have been, because we know what is."—"In the rarer successions of feeling, we allow that there are phænomena of the mind, which we could not have foreknown; but we find it difficult to imagine, in the recurrence of the common mental phænomena, that, even originally, it could have required any peculiar foresight to predict, what we are now conscious of predicting with a readiness, that seems to us almost like the instant glance of intuition."* If a doubt, with reference to the preceding statements, should remain on the minds of any, I would refer them to the case of brutes. That

* P. 212—215.

brutes possess mind, *i. e.* something which is not matter, all but avowed materialists must allow. Yet the succession of states of feeling in the minds of brutes, is not the same with that which is observed in men—a decided proof that the properties of the substance Mind, and, *à fortiori*, the successions of its phænomena, being to us arbitrary, can only be ascertained by actual observation.

This is not the case in the department of Mind alone. The statement holds good with reference to the successions of all phænomena, whether they be material or mental. Whether it be true or not that "better eyes" would enable us to discover the composition of bodies, it is undeniable that no increased power or delicacy of sensual organization could apprize us of their powers and susceptibilities. The changes which result from them, and in which, as we have seen, all the phænomena of the natural world consist, can manifestly be known only by experience. Independently of experience, who could have predicted that spring would invariably precede summer, and summer as invariably follow spring—that the ascent of the sun above the horizon would be succeeded by day, and his descent by night? "Who, by considering separately the mere sensible qualities of bodies, could ascertain the changes which, in new circumstances of union, they might reciprocally suffer or produce? Who could infer, from the *similar appearance* of a lump of sugar and a lump of calcareous spar, that the one would be soluble in water, and the other remain unmelted; or, from *the different aspect* of gunpowder and snow, that a spark would be extinguished, if it fell upon the one, and, if it fell upon the other, would excite an explosion that would be almost irresistible? But for experience, we should

be altogether incapable of predicting any such effects from *either* of the objects compared; or if we did know that the peculiar susceptibility belonged to one of the two, and not to the other, we might as readily suppose that calcareous spar would melt in water as sugar, and as readily, that snow as that gunpowder would detonate by the contact of a spark. It is experience alone which teaches us that these effects ever take place, and that they take place not in all substances, but only in some particular substances."*

There have, indeed, been philosophers who held the opinion, that "if we were acquainted with the intimate structure of bodies, we should then see, not merely *what* corpuscular changes take place in them, but *why* these changes take place, and should thus be able to predict, before experience, the effects which they would reciprocally produce." Mr. Locke, for instance, imagined that if we knew the mechanical affections of a particle of rhubarb, hemlock, opium, and a man, we should be able to tell beforehand that rhubarb will purge, hemlock kill, and opium make a man sleep. This opinion of Mr. Locke is obviously grounded upon the assumption, that all the changes which take place in the material universe, as well as in the cases he refers to, are the effects of contact and impulse, and of a kind, therefore, which may be termed, strictly, mechanical. On this sentiment, we observe, in the *first place*, that it is not supported by evidence; and, *secondly*, that if it were as well as it is ill-founded, it would leave the difficulty where it found it; since the consequences which result from mechanical influence, from even contact itself, are

* Vol. I. p. 114.

known only by experience or testimony. We must see, in order to ascertain the reciprocal influence of bodies, i. e. *their susceptibilities and powers.* "That a ball in motion, when it meets another at rest, should force this to quit its place, appears now to be something which it required no skill or experience to predict; and yet, though our faculties were, in every respect, as vigorous as now; if we could imagine this most common of all phænomena to be wholly unknown to us; what reason should we be able to discover in the circumstances that immediately precede the shock, for inferring the effect that truly results, rather than any other effect whatever? Were the laws of motion previously unknown, it would be in itself as presumable, that the moving ball should simply stop when it reached the other, or that it should merely rebound from it, as that the quiescent ball should be forced by it to quit its state of rest, and move forward in the same direction. We know, indeed, that the effect is different, but it is because we have witnessed it that we know it; not because the laws of motion, or any of the mechanical affections of matter whatever, are qualities that might be inferred independently of observation."*

Mr. Locke's statements, however, suppose that we do not know the mechanical affections of matter. Whatever, then, might have been the case with us, had we possessed this knowledge, it is manifest, since we are destitute of it, that our acquaintance with the sequences of phænomena in the material world, *i. e.* with the powers and susceptibilities of bodies, must be derived from experience alone. But here a difficulty suggests itself. Experience teaches us the

* Brown, pp. 120, 121.

*past* only, not the *future*. But to affirm of any body that it possesses certain powers and susceptibilities, is to state the changes which it will occasion and undergo to the end of time. If, then, there is nothing in the structure of bodies to enable us to predict these changes, from what source does our confidence that they will happen arise? The only satisfactory reply, we apprehend, is, that it springs from an original principle of our nature. The great Former of the mind has so constituted it, that, on the sight of a certain operation of one body upon another, or of a certain change, effected by the former, in the state or appearance of the latter, we are irresistibly led to believe that, in similar circumstances, the same change will take place in all time to come. There is nothing wonderful in this; at any rate it is not *more* wonderful than that any thought, or feeling, or state of mind, should exist in any circumstances whatever. Here, as Dr. Brown justly observes, "nothing is wonderful, or all is wonderful!" The Creator of the universe ordained a certain order of sequence in the phænomena of the natural world; and, by giving to us an original or instinctive belief in the regularity of this sequence, he has enabled us to foresee, and provide for, the physical events that are to arise, without which foresight the creatures for whom he has so bountifully provided, must have been left to perish, "ignorant and irresolute, amid elements that seemed waiting to obey them, and victims of confusion in the very midst of all the harmonies of the universe."

To know the order in which the phænomena of the material universe present themselves to our view, is to know them in the relation of cause and effect. If, then, there is nothing in the structure of bodies

which can enable us to predict this relation,—if our knowledge of it is the result of experience alone, it follows that all we *know* in reference to a cause is, that it is the immediate and invariable antecedent of a certain change, to which we give the name of an effect. It is not said that there *is* nothing more in a cause than immediate and invariable antecedence; for if there were not aptitude in a cause to precede, and in an effect to follow; *i. e.* if there were not something *in the very constitution of the cause*, to adapt it to stand in the relation of precedence, it would follow, in that case, that the cause and effect are only united like two nouns by a conjunction, and so might exchange places; and, further, that there is nothing to tie them together but the direct energy of the great first cause; so that, in fact, God is the only agent in the universe—a sentiment which, by annihilating all the indications of skill, and contrivance, of adaptation of means to ends, with which the universe abounds, would overturn the foundation of morals as well as religion—the doctrine of the divine existence itself.

On this subject I am constrained to dissent from the doctrine of Dr. Brown. Admitting, as he does, that there is aptitude in a cause to precede, he yet denies that a cause is any thing more than an immediate and invariable antecedent; statements which appear to me irreconcilably opposed to each other. Had Dr. Brown contented himself with affirming that no third substance intervenes between the cause and the effect, by which their junction is effected; had he even merely denied that we can form any conception of the nature of this aptitude, I could have gone along with him. But to maintain that there is nothing in a cause but immediate and invariable

antecedence, is, in my judgment, only a different mode of affirming that there is *no* aptitude in a cause to precede; since aptitude to precede differs as much from actual precedence, as aptitude to produce sensation differs from the production of sensation, or from the sensation produced. It strikes me that this admirable writer has not sufficiently distinguished between the cause itself, and our notion of that cause. There may be nothing more in our conception of a cause, than that it immediately and invariably precedes a certain effect; but there *may* be something more in the cause itself. Our *conception* of the fragrance of a rose is, that it produces a certain sensation; but the *fragrance* itself is something different from this. In like manner, our conception of a cause is that of immediate and invariable antecedence; of its adaptation to be an antecedent, we know nothing, we can form no distinct conception; yet it necessarily differs from the antecedence itself, *i. e.* a cause is something more than an immediate and invariable antecedent.

The same general principles apply to the philosophy of Mind, as well as to the philosophy of matter. The phænomena of mind present themselves successively. The order of their sequence is ascertained by experience, and experience alone; there being nothing in one state of mind from which it would have been possible for us to predict the occurrence of any other, by which the Creator determined that it should be followed. Those thoughts and feelings which immediately precede, we denominate causes; those which immediately succeed, we call effects. God has so formed the human mind that there is an aptitude in certain feelings, or states of mind, to precede and follow one another; but of

that aptitude we can form, as we have said, no conception. All we know of the human mind, in this point of view, is confined to the bare fact, that there are certain laws, by which, or according to which, the order in the sequences of its phænomena are regulated; and it is one great object of intellectual science to ascertain what these laws are.

*But the phænomena of mind may be further regarded as complex, and susceptible of analysis.* The term analysis is of Greek origin, and signifies to untie or unloose. Its possible application to the different substances in nature, takes it for granted that they are not simple, but compound substances. It would seem, therefore, to follow as a necessary consequence, that no simple, uncompounded substance, can be analysed; that unless a body consists of parts, like *a mechanical compound,* where the parts are in juxta position, or in a state of aggregation,—or *a chemical compound,* where they are in a state of intimate incorporation, it must be manifestly impossible to resolve it into parts.

A difficulty occurs here then in the science of Mind; for as the mind is a simple indivisible essence, and as all its thoughts and feelings, however complex they may appear, must be, in reality, as simple and indivisible as the mind itself, it would appear as if there could be no analysis of any of the mental phænomena. With respect to matter, the case is essentially different. Here, with seeming simplicity there is real complexity. A piece of glass, which appears really simple, is, in truth, not so. It is composed of a vast number of particles of alkaline and silicious matter bound together, which the art of the chemist can untie, and exhibit in a state of disunion. In this case, the simplicity and oneness is not in the body,

but in our conceptions. Analysis is, accordingly, practicable here. But the most complex thought, or feeling, whatever number of others have had influence in modifying it, is still only one feeling; "for we cannot divide the states or affections of our minds into separate self-existing fractions, as we can divide a compound mass of matter into masses which are separate and self-existing, nor distinguish half a joy or sorrow from a whole joy or sorrow." And yet we cannot but regard some of our ideas and feelings as complex. In what sense then can complexity be ascribed to any of the mental phænomena? How can they be analysed? What is the meaning of the term analysis in its application to them? To these questions, I am not aware of any statements which deserve a moment's regard; but those which are furnished us by Dr. Brown, and his ingenious biographer, the Rev. Mr. Welsh. I shall endeavour to give the reader the substance of the remarks which are made by both these writers, accompanying them, as we proceed, with any observations which may occur to my own mind.

Dr. Brown tells us that our original simple states of mind become so altered and modified, through the influence of the associating principle, combining others with them, that they may never afterwards be found in their original state,—that these modified states of mind, which *result* from the association of many thoughts and feelings, though they are, and in the very nature of the case must be, as simple as the mind itself, necessarily appear to us as if they were actually composed of the sentiments and feelings from which they have resulted, or by which they have been modified. A complex state of mind is, then, one which is the result of certain previous feelings, "to

which, as if existing together, it is felt to have the virtual relation of equality, or the relation which a whole bears to the parts that are comprehended in it. But the conception of a golden mountain is still as much one state or feeling of one simple mind, as either of the separate conceptions of gold, and of a mountain which preceded it." The process of analysis, then, in reference to mind, is the act of distinguishing the separate sensations, or thoughts, or emotions, which appear to be comprehended in these complex feelings, or from which they have resulted. It is not the resolution of a substance actually compound into the elements of which it consists, but of one which *appears* to be compound, into what appear to be its elements. It is a mental or virtual untying of a certain feeling of mind, " which being considered by us as equivalent to the separate ideas from which it results, or as comprehensive of them, is truly to our conception — though to our conception only — and therefore only virtually or relatively to us the inquirers, the same as if it were composed of the separate feelings co-existing, as the elements of a body co-exist in space."

The Rev. Mr. Welsh thinks, on the contrary, that complexness, with reference to the mental phænomena, is actual, or real; and, consequently, that the analyses of the intellectual chemist are more than virtual. It is, however, not a complexness of substances as in the material world, but of relations only; and so analogous to the vast diversity of aspects, and complexity of states under which bodies, perfectly simple in themselves, exhibit themselves according to their relation to other objects. Analysis, then, in reference to mind, does not resemble the decompounding processes of chemistry, because such a separation of parts is felt to be

impossible; but it bears, he adds, "a very striking analogy to that species of philosophy which is occupied with the general qualities of matter, and which, if it observes particular substances at all, observes them only with the design of resolving the phænomena they exhibit into their simplest and most general laws. Thus, we may resolve the particular properties of gold into the general qualities of matter, and show that its weight, its colour, its form, its cohesion, its motion, are but particular instances of the great laws of repulsion and attraction. In a manner analogous to this, we resolve the diversified phænomena of mind into a few simple and primitive laws, by which term we denote the most general circumstances in which the phænomena are felt by us to agree."*

In a subsequent part of his book, where the views of this excellent writer are more fully developed, he supposes us to experience the sensation excited by the fragrance of a rose. In this case, the mind exists in one simple relation, to one quality of an external object. The substance mind is simple; its relation is also simple. But the sensation of fragrance may co-exist with the remembrance of the fragrance, or with other feelings. Here we have the mind existing in one simple state, in so far as it relates to its essential nature;—the consciousness, which is the result of the simultaneous influence of different objects upon the organs of sense, is also simple; it is one state of one indivisible subject, but it is one state formed of a variety of relations.†

I have endeavoured to collect the substance of this writer's statements, though I have not been able to present them always in his own well-selected words. I have been the more anxious to do justice to the

* P. 210. † Pp. 234-5.

sentiments of my reverend friend, if he will allow me thus to designate him, because I cannot exactly agree with him, or rather, perhaps, because I do not fully comprehend him. At first view, I acknowledge, his explanation of the complexness, which we cannot but ascribe to many of our mental states, appears to be recommended by greater simplicity than that of Dr. Brown; but I find myself unable to attach any very definite meaning to the term relation, as used by him, in this connexion. On the whole, I prefer the explanation of Dr. Brown, the substance of which is so admirably given in the following passage, that the reader will readily pardon me for quoting it.—"It is this feeling of the relation of certain states of mind, to certain other states of mind, which solves the whole mystery of mental analysis, that seemed at first so inexplicable; the virtual decomposition, in our thought, of what is by its very nature indivisible. The mind, indeed, it must be allowed, is absolutely simple in all its states; every separate state or affection of it must therefore be absolutely simple; but in certain cases, in which a feeling is the result of other feelings preceding it, it is its very nature to appear to involve the union of those preceding feelings; and to distinguish the separate sensations, or thoughts, or emotions, of which, on reflection, it thus seems to be comprehensive, is to perform an intellectual process, which, though not a real analysis, is an analysis at least relatively to our conception."* And again, "What the chemist does in matter, the intellectual analysist does in mind; the one distinguishing by a purely mental process of reflection the elements of his complex feelings, as the other operates on his material compounds,

* Pp. 220-1.

by processes that are themselves material. Though the term analysis may be used in reference to both processes, the mental as well as the material, since the result of the process is virtually the same in both, it has been universally employed by philosophers in the laws of the mind without any accurate definition of the process; and I was careful, therefore, to explain to you the peculiar meaning in which it is strictly to be understood in our science; that you might not extend to the mind and its affections, that essential divisibility which is inconsistent with its very nature; and suppose that, when we speak of complex notions, and of thoughts and feelings that are united by association with other thoughts and feelings, we speak of a plurality of separable things. The complex mental phænomena, as I explained to you, are complex only in relation to our mode of conceiving them. They are, strictly and truly, as simple and indivisible states of a substance, which is necessarily, in all its states, simple and indivisible,—the results, rather than the compounds of former feelings,—to which, however, they seem to us, and from the very nature of the feelings themselves, cannot but seem to us, to bear the same species of relation, which a whole bears to the parts that compose it. The office of intellectual analysis, accordingly, in the mode in which I have explained it to you, has regard to this relation only. It is to trace the various affections or states of mind that have successively contributed to form or to modify any peculiar sentiment or emotion, and to develop the elements, to which, after tracing this succession, the resulting sentiment or emotion is felt by us to bear virtually that relation of seeming comprehensiveness of which I spoke."*

* Vol. I. pp. 234-5.

In the scientific examination of mind, analysis must be employed, as well as in that of matter. It is less, perhaps, a subject of wonder than of regret, to those who are acquainted with the literary productions of Mr. Dugald Stewart, that he should interpose the high authority of his name to prevent an entrance even into a field of investigation so important. How can it be doubted that in education, oratory and poetry, there would exist more power in guiding the thoughts and feelings of men in general, if we possessed a more intimate knowledge of the elements of our complex sentiments and affections; *i. e.* a knowledge of the varied simpler thoughts and feelings, which the power of association has bound indissolubly together? From the influence of how many circumstances, adapted to modify injuriously our subsequent states of mind,— to pervert the judgment, and to corrupt the heart,— might we be preserved, were intellectual science more generally studied and understood! No man, whose sentiments are guided by Divine Revelation, can expect that any attempted process of moral reformation, without higher concurring energy, will subvert the empire of evil in the world. But every possible corrective of a moral nature we ought to employ; while we look to higher instrumentality, and higher agency, for more glorious triumphs than any which education alone can achieve.

## CHAP. III.

### THE TRUE NATURE OF THE POWERS AND SUSCEPTIBILITIES OF THE MIND EXPLAINED.

THE phænomena of mind, or its varied thoughts and feelings, comprise, as we have seen, every thing, in relation to it, of which we can obtain any knowledge. It will be desirable, therefore, to endeavour to ascertain what is the notion we ought to form of these phænomena.

The body possesses various members, distinct from each other, though they form unitedly one beautiful and perfect whole. And hence it is possible to lose one of the bodily members while the others remain, or to put one in motion, while the others continue at rest.

From our proneness to reason analogically, we are apt to transfer the same mode of thinking to the mind—to conceive that it consists of various powers, as the body is composed of different members, each of which is distinct from the others, and also from the mind itself—capable of existing apart from the rest, or of perishing while its associate powers remain in being, and in vigour.

A little reflection will, however, convince us that some at least of these notions are utterly inconsistent

with our conceptions of mind as a simple indivisible essence. It will remind us that, as the mind does not, like the body, consist of parts, no analogy borrowed from the latter will apply here; that the powers of perceiving, feeling, judging, &c. are not to be considered as separate portions or members, so to speak, of the mind; but as capabilities, imparted to it by its Creator, of existing in various states of thought, and feeling, which constitute the whole phænomena of the mind, and, as far at least as the physiology of the mind is concerned, the exclusive subject of inquiry and examination.

With reference then to these phænomena, let it be observed, that they are not to be regarded as constituting something distinct from the mind, but as being the mind itself in different states. This is one of the fundamental principles of Dr. Brown's philosophy; and its importance is so great as to render it deserving of a little fuller elucidation. I shall view it, *first*, in its bearing upon the actual phænomena of the mind; and, *secondly*, in reference to what we denominate its powers and susceptibilities.

According to the doctrine of the Peripatetics, ideas are not merely distinct from the mind, but actual images of objects which are contemplated by the mind, as it was supposed, in perception, and which rise again to view in every act of memory. This doctrine is now, however, universally discarded; and, indeed, so manifest is its absurdity, that it is impossible to avoid expressing astonishment at the length of time during which it held dominion over the public mind. In many instances the existence of such an image is altogether incredible, or rather impossible. "That there should be an image of an individual object in the mind, as of a rose, is conceivable. But what

image can there be of honesty, of justice, or of any other similar quality?" It is now, accordingly, generally admitted, that an idea is nothing more than the conception which the mind forms of an object. It is not, however, to be doubted that this word, together with the similar terms, notion, thought, &c., is still apt to be regarded as denoting something *in* the mind, distinct from the mind itself, and capable of being actually separated from it. We talk of a notion, a thought, or an idea, as though it constituted a real independent entity, like gold, silver, &c. "There seems," says Mr. Welsh, "to be a natural tendency in all men, when they first reflect upon the subjects of their consciousness, to conceive that ideas and feelings are something different from the mind itself. We ascribe to them a real existence, shadowy and undefined it may be, but still real, as if they were separate entities over which we exercise a mysterious power, calling them into existence, and allowing them again to fade into nothing at our will."* All this is delusion. There is no notion or idea in the mind, and distinguishable from it. A thought, in the concrete state, *i. e.* "a particular thought, as it really exists in the mind of an individual, is the mind thinking"—an idea is the mind conceiving. "A cause of thought we can easily conceive separate from the mind, in an outward object,"—"or an object we can conceive separate from the mind about which our thoughts are employed; but what notion is it possible to form of a thought distinguishable from the mind thinking,"† or of an idea from the mind conceiving?

Our notions, thoughts, and ideas, then, are nothing more than the mind itself in different states: and a

* P. 215. † P. 221.

similar assertion may be made with reference to our endlessly diversified sensations. They are not distinct and separable from the mind. There is not the mind, *and* its sensation, as we say there is the body, and the limbs; for the sensation *is* the mind affected in a particular way. When the leg, or arm, has received some injury, we do not say there is the arm, and its wound; for the wound is, not indeed the arm itself, but the arm in a particular state. In like manner a sensation is not actually the mind itself, as Mr. Welsh properly observes; for we employ the word Mind to signify the unknown substance of which the qualities only can be ascertained,—but the mind, *i.e.* this unknown substance, in a particular state.

The same thing may be said of the varied affections of the mind. We are not to conceive of the emotions of joy, sorrow, hope, fear, &c., which there is reason to think many do, as so many feelings laid up, so to speak, in the mind—feelings distinct from the mind, and capable of being developed by appropriate circumstances. They are the mind itself in different states, or affected in various ways. They only exist, accordingly, when they are felt. There is no joy, or sorrow, &c. *in* the mind when these emotions are not experienced. Doubtless the mind possesses a *capability* of being made to exist in those particular states to which we give the name of hope, fear, &c.; and, for ordinary purposes, it may be sufficiently accurate to call this capability the affection of hope, fear, &c. But, in reality, hope, or fear, is the mind *affected* in a particular manner, or existing in a particular state. The capability of experiencing these emotions, stands in a similar relation to the emotions themselves, with the power of perceiving extension, solidity, &c., to the perception of extension, &c. itself.

It is not difficult to shew the application of these principles to what are called the powers and susceptibilities of the mind. They are not to be regarded as distinct from the mind itself, or as separate from each other. Of this the great Mr. Locke was well aware. "These powers of the mind, viz. of perceiving and preferring," says this writer, "are usually called by another name, and the ordinary way of speaking is, that the understanding, and the will, are two faculties of the mind; a word proper enough if it be used, as all words should be, so as not to breed any confusion in men's thoughts by being supposed, as I suspect it has been, to stand for some real beings in the soul, that performed those actions of understanding and volition. For when we say the will is the commanding or superior faculty of the soul; that it is, or is not free; that it determines the inferior faculties; that it follows the dictates of the understanding, &c.; though these, and the like expressions, by those that carefully attend to their own ideas, and conduct their thoughts more by the evidence of things than the sound of words, may be understood in a clear and distinct sense; yet I suspect, I say, that this way of speaking of faculties has misled many into a confused notion of so many distinct agents in us, which had their several provinces and authorities, and did command, obey, and perform several actions, as so many distinct beings; which has been no small occasion of wrangling, obscurity, and uncertainty, in questions relating to them."*

The faculties of the mind, or its powers and susceptibilities, let it then be remembered, are not to be distinguished from the mind itself. The words

* Book II. Chap. xxi. § 6.

denote the constitution it has received from its Creator, by which it is capable of existing in all those different states, which form the consciousness of life. Our actual feelings depend upon the nature of the mind, and the nature of the objects by which the mind is affected. Were a change in either to take place, the phænomena, which it is the business of intellectual science to contemplate, would undergo a corresponding change. "It is the object, indeed, which affects the mind when sentient; but it is the original susceptibility of the mind itself, which determines and modifies the particular affection, very nearly, if I may illustrate what is mental by so coarse an image, as the impression which a seal leaves on melted wax depends, not on the qualities of the wax alone, or of the seal alone, but on the softness of the one, and the form of the other."*

Thus the powers and susceptibilities of the mind are not to be identified with the actual phænomena of mind, though they constitute nothing different from the mind itself. They are, in fact, the nature of the mind;—its *capabilities* of feeling, thinking, conceiving, judging, &c.; an *actual* feeling, or conception, or judgment, as it exists in the mind, is the mind itself in a particular state.

There is not a very broad line of distinction between the powers and the susceptibilities of the mind. Both of the terms denote a certain constitution of the mind. The latter exhibits what Locke called its passive powers, that is, its capacities of *undergoing* certain changes; the latter intimates its faculties of *producing* certain changes. The odour of a rose comes in contact with the olfactory nerves, and a certain mental

* Brown, vol. I. p. 22.

feeling, or a sensation, is the result; *i. e.* a change is produced in the state of the mind; this change indicates the existence of a mental *susceptibility.* We will to move our limbs; the limbs are instantly obedient to volition; and the change in the state of the body, produced by volition, indicates a mental *power.*

To the above distinction, though correct, no great practical importance is to be attached. It is of far greater consequence to remember, that neither the term susceptibility nor power denotes any thing distinct from the constitution of the mind. The *susceptibility* to which we have referred, is a certain constitution of mind, in consequence of which, a change in its state takes place on the approach of a certain material object. The *power* to which we have referred, is also a certain constitution of mind, in consequence of which a change takes place in the state of the body, subsequent to a certain feeling of mind. What is a sensation but a certain state of mind? What is a volition but a certain state of mind? They both imply a certain constitution of mind by which it is rendered capable of existing in these different states; but whether we give to this constitution the name of susceptibility, or power, or capacity, is of no material importance. When the state of mind of which we at any time speak, is regarded as a consequent of something else, it may be convenient to say that it indicates a corresponding mental susceptibility; and when it is regarded as the antecedent of something else, that it proves the existence of a mental power. But the susceptibility, and the power, are not different from the mind. Both may be included under the general term capacity of existing in certain states,—a capacity of which we can know nothing, but by the states of thought, and feeling, which grow out of it,

and which is to be ascribed to the sovereign pleasure of the Creator of the mind.

Nor are the states of mind which are thus indicative of what are called mental powers, and mental susceptibilities, so radically different as it is sometimes imagined. The mind has the power of volition; it has also the susceptibility of sensation. Now between an actual sensation, and an actual volition, what essential distinction, of the kind, that is, which the words susceptibility and power might lead us to expect, is found to exist? They are both states of mind. They are both *caused* by something else; for volition can no more exist without a cause than sensation. Each of them may be the cause of something else. The sensation of hunger may *produce* the desire of food; a volition may *produce* a bodily movement. Why then should the latter be said to indicate a mental power, and the former a mental susceptibility? In fact there is not a single state of mind which may not sustain the double relation of cause and effect—which may not be itself a change from a former state, and *lead* to a change. So that, according to the foregoing distinction between susceptibilities and powers, all our mental faculties may be regarded as constituting both; and if an attempt be made to establish any other distinction, it will, we think, be found to prove abortive.

In the subsequent part of this volume, the term susceptibilities, or powers, will be used to denote the nature or capacity, or constitution of the mind, by which it is capable of existing in those varied states of thought, and feeling, which form the consciousness of life.

The whole of the preceding statement may be illustrated by a reference to the properties or qualities of

physical substances. These properties cannot be separated from the body in which they inhere. There is no such thing in nature, as a quality apart from its substance. The truth of this will further appear from another statement which we now proceed to make, viz. that these properties constitute nothing distinct from the substance itself. They are the substance formed capable of undergoing and of originating certain changes; its capacities of *producing* changes, we term its powers; its capacities of *undergoing* changes, we denominate its susceptibilities.

It has been too common to conceive of the powers, properties, or qualities of a substance, as something superadded to it, and capable of being withdrawn from it. This is a great mistake. Dr. Brown has shewn, with resistless force of argument, that "the substances which exist in nature, are every thing that has a real existence in nature." The statement, however, of this writer, and of his able and excellent biographer, the Rev. D. Welsh, that the powers, or qualities of a substance, are the substance itself *considered in relation* to certain changes which it undergoes or occasions, seems to me liable to exception. It is in harmony with their doctrine with regard to causation, and must stand or fall with it. If the powers, &c. of bodies, are those bodies *considered* in different relations, it follows that if we, who observe the relations, did not exist, the powers of which we speak would not exist. Besides, as it is not the direct energy of the Deity, which, according to their system, binds the cause and the effect together, it leaves the important fact, how it comes to pass that the particular relations which we actually witness exist, and not apposite relations, altogether unaccounted for. I prefer, therefore, the statement given above, viz. that the powers or

qualities of a substance, are not indeed to be regarded as any thing different from the substance, but the particular nature, or constitution, which the Creator has given to it, in consequence of which it is capable of existing in the various relations it sustains to other bodies. A similar exception must, we think, be taken against the statement, that the powers or susceptibilities of the mind are the mind itself, considered in relation to certain changes which it occasions, or undergoes. They rather denote, as it has been already stated, that particular nature or constitution which has been given to it by its Creator; in consequence of which it is capable of existing in these various relations. Power, or susceptibility, in short, denotes not the relations themselves, nor the consideration of them, but a physical capacity of sustaining them.

Before we leave this subject, there is one source of misconception, against which the reader should be especially cautioned. The states of thought and feeling, in which the mind is capable of existing, which constitute the phænomena of the mind—all, indeed, which can be known of the mind—are incalculable in point of number. Now as each state of mind supposes a previous susceptibility of existing in that state, we are in danger of imagining that there must be a number of *separate* susceptibilities in the mind, corresponding with its individual states. The error involved in this conception will be perceived, when the previous statements with reference to the meaning of the term susceptibility are recollected. A mental susceptibility is nothing different from the mind itself. It is the simple indivisible essence, formed capable of producing or undergoing certain changes, in which the whole phænomena of mind consist. The mind is not made up of parts; it cannot

therefore consist of a number of separate susceptibilities. But though simple and indivisible, it may be capable of producing and undergoing changes which are not in their nature less different from each other than are the circumstances in which they arise. This is finely illustrated by Mr. Welsh, in regard to the properties of physical substances. An object possesses colour and gravity, *i. e.* it excites a certain feeling in our mind to which we give the name of the sensation of colour; and it attracts the earth and other substances. Now the question is, are there two distinct powers in the object to produce these different effects? In reply, Mr. Welsh says, "Now, without any minute analysis of what we mean by colour, gravitation, &c., it may be observed that the colour, not being in the object, is merely an effect of the object on our minds; and the approach of the earth is not in the object, it is an effect produced on the earth. And, as the objects operated upon are essentially different, there is no occasion for supposing two different powers for the two different results. It might be demonstrated that, if the substance were one, and nothing more than one, it would, when placed in relation to objects so essentially different as a mass of matter, and a spiritual substance, produce essentially different effects. To suppose then that there must be two powers, when one is sufficient to account for all that we see produced, is an unwarrantable violation of Newton's simplest axiom. How different is the sensation of heat upon approaching the finger to a lighted candle, and the melting of wax when it is placed in a similar situation. But no one surely will maintain, that heat has the power of melting wax, and a different power for exciting a peculiar sensation—there is nothing but the heat simply in relation to two different substances.

Why, then, should we any more suppose different powers inherent in the gold, or, indeed, in any other simple substance?* " And, again, in a passage which I trust he will excuse me for thus introducing, "a piece of wax is susceptible of a thousand different impressions, but there are not a thousand different qualities in the wax; there is the one quality of taking impressions, conceived in relation to a thousand impressive forms. Thus it is with the mind. Millions of figures may be placed before our eyes, one after another, and the mind is in a different state upon every new figure being presented. But this is surely one simple mind, considered in relation to a million objects. So with colours, sounds, &c." In harmony with previous remarks, I should be disposed to make a slight change in the phraseology, or little more than in the phraseology, of these admirable passages.

* *Vide* Memoirs of Brown, pp. 111, 112.

# CHAP. IV.

## THE MANNER IN WHICH OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE MENTAL PHÆNOMENA IS OBTAINED.

Of the essence both of Matter and of Mind, we are, as we have seen, profoundly ignorant. All that can be known, with reference to both, is comprehended in the varying phænomena which they exhibit. An important question then occurs here, "In what way do we gain our acquaintance with these phænomena? How do the worlds of matter and of mind become known to us? Is it necessary that we should be endowed with special and separate powers to obtain that little information, with reference to each, to which it is possible for us, in the present state, to attain?"

To the latter question an answer has usually been given in the affirmative. *Sensation*, or *perception*, it is generally said, is the link which unites us to the material universe,—that high and, in many respects, mysterious power, which reveals to us the phænomena of nature, or the world *without* us; while consciousness makes us acquainted with the feelings and changeful appearances of the world *within*.

Now concerning the way in which the phænomena of matter become known to us, there is, and can be, no doubt. External objects affect our organs of sense,

or, as we are accustomed to say, (though the words convey no distinct meaning, being little better than a cloak for ignorance,) make some impression upon them. This impression upon the organ is instantly followed by a certain feeling, or state of mind,—a feeling, or state, which necessarily supposes that the mind must have been so constituted by its Creator as to be capable of being made to exist in that particular state; or, in other words, that a certain power—the power of sensation, or perception, has been conferred upon it by the Deity. Thus the phænomena of matter become known to us, and can only become known to us, through the medium of a certain physical or bodily conformation, in union with a certain mental susceptibility or power.

The same mode of thinking we have been in the habit, as it appears to me, of transferring improperly to the phænomena of mind. Since the properties of matter can only be discovered by means of the power of perception,—to which power the various bodies by which we are surrounded, together with their various properties, stand in the relation of objects,—we are apt to imagine, that the phænomena of mind require for their recognition a peculiar power, to which a definite name must be attached. But in suffering ourselves to be seduced by this analogy, we forget that the phænomena of the mind are its varied thoughts and feelings; and that it may not, accordingly, require what we call a distinct power of mind, to give us the knowledge of our feelings, though a particular faculty is necessary to secure to us an acquaintance with bodies which are out of the mind, whose existence can, accordingly, only become known by some operation upon the mind, or by the production of some change in its state, the very production of which necessarily

supposes, as we have seen, that the mind is possessed of a corresponding susceptibility of undergoing that change.

To this supposed power, which has thus for its objects, as it is conceived, the phænomena of mind, philosophers have given the name of Consciousness. We shall first examine their statements with regard to its nature—statements in which there are some things to commend, though the general doctrine they advocate must, it is conceived, be abandoned.

"Consciousness," says Dr. Reid, "is a word used by philosophers to signify that *immediate knowledge* which we have of our present thoughts and purposes, and, in general, of all the present operations of the mind."* Within the compass of a few lines, he speaks of it as "*a power by which* we have a knowledge of the operations of our own minds." Again, in another part of his generally excellent writings, he tell us that "Consciousness is an operation of the understanding of its own kind, and cannot be logically defined." "The objects of it," he adds, "are our present pains, our pleasures, our hopes, our fears, our desires, our doubts, our thoughts of every kind, &c." It is scarcely possible to conceive that the general views of this writer were very distinct, when he could permit phraseology so loose and contradictory to escape from his pen. Consciousness is, first, the immediate *knowledge* we have of our thoughts, &c.; then, a *power by which* we know them; then, again, an *operation* of the *understanding*, (*i.e.* according to the philosophy of this writer, a power of a power,) which cannot be logically defined. It is surely needless to remark, that the first and second statements are self-

* Vol. I. p. 32.

contradictory, and the third, contrary to both. If consciousness be *knowledge*, it cannot be *a power* to know. If it be an operation of the understanding, it can, on his system, be neither the one nor the other.

Passing by this inaccuracy, some of the subsequent statements of Dr. Reid deserve our attention. He tells us, in substance at least, and that very justly, that consciousness has relation only to things in the mind, such as our thoughts, sensations, emotions, &c.—that these are the only proper objects of consciousness—that it cannot be said correctly that we are conscious of the beings and things that surround us—that they are objects of perception, not of consciousness—that it is improper to say we are conscious of things past, even of past feelings, &c.—that they are objects of memory, not consciousness. Dr. Reid might have added, that though we cannot be conscious of anything out of the mind, we may be said to be conscious of the perceptions and emotions they awaken, because they are really things in the mind, or the mind in particular states of thought and feeling. This power of consciousness, Dr. Reid affirms to be a different power from that by which we perceive external objects; and a philosopher, he says, ought carefully to preserve this distinction. Regarding consciousness thus as an original power of the mind, distinct from all others, by which we gain the knowledge of things in the mind, our author proceeds to shew why we put confidence in its testimony. The mind experiences a sensation: consciousness assures us that such is the case. "But if I am asked to prove that I cannot be deceived by consciousness, I can find," he says, "no proof." "I cannot find any antecedent truth from which it is deduced, or upon which its evidence may depend." He tells us further, that the irresistible

conviction we have of the operations of our minds, is not the effect of reasoning, but is immediate and intuitive. "The existence, therefore," he adds, "of those passions and operations of our minds, of which we are conscious, is a first principle, which nature requires us to believe upon her authority."

A simpler view of the nature of consciousness would have shewn this excellent writer, how completely unnecessary are all such statements. They accord with, and are indeed required by his system, which regards consciousness as an original power of the mind, and whose testimony, like that of perception, it might be supposed necessary to confirm and establish. But if consciousness be not an original power—if the consciousness of the moment be nothing more than the feeling of the moment—if the consciousness of pain, for instance, be the sensation itself, it is manifestly absurd to attempt even to prove that we experience it. All that can be desired or said is, that we actually suffer pain. No one, in a sound state of mind, will ask for proof that the feeling really exists.

Mr. Stewart agrees in the general doctrine of his predecessor. "It is," says he, "by the immediate evidence of consciousness, that we are assured of the present existence of our various sensations, of all our affections, passions, hopes, fears, thoughts, &c." He states, very justly, that consciousness is confined to what we call states of mind—that it does not inform us of the existence of mind itself; and, he adds, "it would not be possible to arrive at the knowledge of its existence, even supposing us to be created in the full possession of all the intellectual capacities which belong to human nature, if no impression were ever to be made on an external sense." He proceeds to

observe, "that the moment in which a sensation is produced, we learn two facts at once—the existence of the sensation, and our own existence as sentient beings; in other words, the very first exercise of consciousness necessarily implies a belief, not only of the present existence of what is felt, but of the present existence of that which thinks and feels, or of that being which I denote, I, and myself." It is, however, of the former of these facts only that we are conscious.*

At present we say nothing with reference to the origin of the belief of our own existence; but we would just ask, *en passant*, what is meant by the assertion "that the moment in which a sensation is produced, *we learn the existence of the sensation?* Is not this an identical proposition, amounting to the statement,—"the instant we feel, *we feel?*"

Mr. Stewart is not free from that vagueness of statement, of which it was found necessary to complain in the case of Dr. Reid. In his "Outlines," he enumerates consciousness among the *powers* of the mind. And yet, in his formal definition of the term, he says, "the word denotes the immediate *knowledge* which the mind has of its thoughts, &c." He then immediately adds, "the belief with which it (consciousness) is attended," (*i.e.* according to his own definition, with which our immediate knowledge of our thoughts, &c. is attended), "has been considered as the most irresistible of any, &c."† Thus, consciousness is first a power of the mind; then the immediate knowledge we have of our thoughts; and, finally, this immediate knowledge of our thoughts is attended with an irresistible belief that we have them!

* *Vide* Outlines, pp. 18, 19. Philosophical Essays, Essay I. Chap. I. Elements, Vol. II. p. 52—54.

† Outlines, p. 18.

Statements thus confused and self-contradictory, proceeding from such men as Dr. Reid and Mr. Stewart, go very far to induce us to suspect, that there must be some radical defect in the opinions which have been held on this important subject; and the mistakes of others, who agree with them in their general doctrine, are calculated to strengthen this suspicion. Thus it has been said, that "consciousness is awakened by two different classes of objects,—that we are conscious of the effects produced by external objects upon the organs of sense,—and of the mind's attention to them." By the word "effects," in the first member of the sentence, the writer meant, not effects upon the organ, as the language would seem to imply, but upon *the mind;* for he immediately adds, "these effects are sensations." Of the attention of the mind to these sensations, we are said to be conscious; and it is by means of it, (viz. this attention) that we gain, as it is further said, the knowledge of external objects. This latter assertion, however, unless understood with great modifications, is untrue. We might attend for ever to the sensation produced by the fragrance of a rose, for instance, without perceiving the rose; yea, without the idea once arising in the mind, that the feeling resulted from the influence of any thing *ad extra.* We should believe, indeed, that it had a cause; but we might imagine that the cause was in the mind. It is not every sensation that gives us the notion of external objects; and when that notion does arise, it springs, by a law of the mind, as we shall afterwards see, out of the sensation itself; it is not gained by attention to it, nor by any process of reflection upon it.

It was left for Dr. Brown to give us more correct, and therefore intelligible, views of the nature of consciousness. His perspicacious mind could not repose

upon the vagueness of preceding writers. Indeed, their representations are at direct variance with those fundamental parts of his system which have come under our review. The old system, built upon a falsely admitted analogy between matter and mind, regards individual sensations, &c. as standing in the relation of objects, to the sentient mind—as external things stand in the relation of objects to the mind in perception. "Now that any particular feeling is so radically distinct and different from the sentient principle, as to justify us in classifying it in the relation of an object to this sentient principle, is obviously inconsistent," says the Rev. D. Welsh, " with his doctrine concerning the nature of our thoughts, feelings, &c. viz. that they are not distinct from the mind, but the mind itself in particular states."

Accordingly Dr. Brown maintains, that consciousness is not a distinct power of the mind—that the word consciousness is a general term expressive of the whole variety of our feelings; so that the phrase, the whole consciousness of life, denotes all the feelings we experience during life;—he states that to be conscious of a sensation, and to have that sensation, is the same thing. Referring to Dr. Reid's statements, he says, " To me, I must confess that this attempt to double, as it were, our various feelings, by making them not to constitute our consciousness, but to be the objects of it, as of a distinct intellectual power, is not a faithful statement of the phænomena of the mind, but is founded partly on a confusion of thought, and still more on a confusion of language. Sensation is not the object of consciousness, different from itself, but a particular sensation is the consciousness of the moment; as a particular hope, or fear, or grief, or resentment, or simple remembrance, may be the actual

consciousness of the next moment." "In the mind," he tells us, "that there is nothing but a certain series of feelings, or of transient successive states;—that the consciousness we have of them, is nothing more than the thoughts and sensations themselves, which could not be thoughts and sensations if they were not felt;"—"that the evidence of consciousness is nothing more than the evidence implied in the mere existence of our sensations, thoughts, desires,—which it is utterly impossible for us to believe to be, and not to be; or, in other words, impossible for us to *feel*, and not to *feel*, at the same moment."*

With these statements of Dr. Brown, I most fully concur. Little more, indeed, seems to me necessary to secure their general reception, than to lay them before the view of the public. They are accompanied by no difficulties to prevent their general adoption; while, amongst many others, the two following may be mentioned as presenting formidable objections against the doctrine of Dr. Reid and Mr. Stewart.

First, it supposes the mind not merely to exist in two different states, but in two different states with reference to the same thing, at the same time, which is manifestly absurd. Take the case, for instance, of the sensation produced by the odour of a rose. Here the sensation itself, according to Dr. Reid's doctrine, is one thing—the consciousness of it, another. The sensation is the feeling, or state of mind, which results from the contact of the odoriferous particles, and the organ of sense; the consciousness is the immediate *knowledge* we have that it exists; so that the mind is in two different states—in a state of feeling, and in a state of consciousness of the feeling, at the same time,

* *Vide* p. 244—257.

and with reference to the same object; which is equivalent with saying, that we remember a sensation, and *have* the sensation at the same time.

Secondly, Dr. Reid's doctrine that consciousness is a distinct power of the mind, by which we gain the knowledge of its present thoughts, sensations, &c. necessarily supposes that, without this faculty of consciousness, an impenetrable veil would hang over all the mental phænomena,—that we might and, indeed, must remain in a state of utter and hopeless ignorance of our infinitely diversified thoughts and feelings; in other words, that we should think without thinking, and feel without feeling;—a statement which involves in it a direct contradiction; for a sensation which is not felt, is not a sensation at all.

## CHAP. V.

### THE ORIGIN OF THE NOTION OF SELF, AND THE IDENTITY OF THE THINKING PRINCIPLE AMIDST ALL THE VARIETY OF ITS CONSCIOUSNESS.

THE notion of self is the conception of the existence of mind, as the permanent subject of the ever-shifting and endlessly diversified phænomena, of which, in popular language, we are said to be conscious. How then does this notion arise? The question is not unattended with difficulty; and, as it might have been expected, the answer returned by different philosophers is by no means the same. If the existence of Mind, or of the being denoted by the words I, and myself, were a subject of consciousness, it would be manifestly as absurd to put the inquiry, "How do we attain the knowledge and belief of our existence?" as to ask in what manner we know that we experience a certain sensation. But this is not the case. "We are conscious," says Mr. Stewart, "of our sensations, thoughts, desires, &c., but we are not conscious of the existence of mind itself." There is room, accordingly, for the question, "In what manner does the notion of self, or of the existence of mind, as distinct from our sensations, (in the sense in which it can alone be said to be distinct,) arise?"

The manner in which Mr. Stewart replies to the question, has been laid before the reader. He contends that, by an original law of the mind, the very first sensation gives us the notion of our own existence, as sentient beings; or, that the first exercise of consciousness, implies a belief of the present existence of that which feels, *i.e.* of the existence of the being denoted by the words I, and myself.

This would seem also to have been the opinion of Dr. Reid, for, after declaring that every man believes himself to be something different from his ideas and impressions; something which continues the same identical self, when all his ideas and impressions are changed, he tells us,—when proceeding to treat of the origin of the notion conveyed by the word We, in such phrases as, "We are conscious of pain,"—"that our sensations and thoughts give us the notion of a mind, and of a faculty to think and feel. The faculty of smelling," he adds, "is something very different from the actual sensation of smelling; for the faculty may remain when we have no sensation. And the mind is no less different from the faculty; for it continues the same individual being when that faculty is lost. Yet this sensation suggests to us both a faculty and a mind; and not only suggests a notion of them," he adds, "but creates a belief of their existence."*

The doctrine of Dr. Brown is essentially different. The notion of self, or of mind, being the conception of something which remains unchanged, amidst changing phænomena, cannot, he maintains, arise out of any one sensation, or state of mind. Conceive of a sentient being, brought into existence, and

* Inquiry into the Human Mind, 5th edit. pp. 61, 62.

experiencing, for the first time, a simple sensation; the whole consciousness of that being would be the sensation he felt. "There would be," says he, "in this first momentary state, no separation of self, and the sensation; no little proposition formed in the mind, *I feel,* or *I am conscious of a feeling* (that cannot be the case till the notion of I or myself has arisen); but the *feeling* and the *sentient I* will, for the moment, be the same." He afterwards states, that if our feelings merely succeeded each other, in the same manner as the moving bodies of a long procession are reflected from a mirror, without any vestige of them as *past,* or, consequently, any remembrance of their successions, we should be as incapable of forming a notion of the sentient substance *mind,* abstracted from the momentary sensation, as the mirror itself; though we should, indeed, differ from the mirror, in having what mind only *can* have, the sensations themselves, thus rapidly existing and perishing."*

The notion of self, according to the statements of this writer, can only arise on the recollection of some past feeling; so that it must ultimately be traced to memory, the revealer to us of our past feelings. A sensation of acute pain is experienced; it is succeeded by a vivid emotion of pleasure, and the remembrance of the former co-exists with the latter. The sensation and the emotion are felt by us to be radically different; yet we conceive of them, and cannot but conceive of them, as feelings of the same being; *i.e.* there arises the notion of something which is permanent, amidst the successions of feelings, and which constitutes the subject of these feelings; or, in other

* Pp. 293, 294.

words, there arises the notion of I, or myself. It is not, however, merely from a recollection of the particular kind specified, that this notion arises. It *may* exist, and we are disposed to think must so exist, with every instance of remembrance. "We *remember*," says Dr. Brown; and in that remembrance is involved the belief, the source of which we seek. It is not merely a past feeling that arises to us, in what is commonly termed memory, but a feeling that is recognized by us as *ours*, in that past time of which we think; a feeling, therefore, of that mind which now remembers what it before saw, perhaps, or heard, or enjoyed, or suffered.*

On the whole, I am disposed to agree with Dr. Brown, in his account of the *actual* origin of our notion of self. I cannot go with him, however, in the assertion that this notion cannot arise out of any one state of mind; and that the doctrine of Mr. Stewart must accordingly be rejected, as affirming what is in itself impossible. I know of no reason why God should not have so formed the human mind, as that the notion of self should arise in the manner stated by Mr. Stewart; whether he has actually done so is another question, and to that I should reply in the negative. Dr. Brown has been led to the assertion, that memory is essential to the conception in question, by confounding two things which appear to me distinct; viz. the notion of *self*, and the notion of *identity*. The *former* would seem to me to be the conception of mind, as the permanent subject of our thoughts, feelings, &c.; the latter, the conception of this mind, as *unchanging*. The two statements cannot be affirmed to be identical, but on the false

* Vol. I. p. 294.

assumption, that substances are incapable of change. We might possess a mind, and yet that mind, though continuing to be the subject of our sensations, thoughts, &c., might be liable to suffer change, and actually undergo it. Dr. Brown identifies these conceptions. "The knowledge of our mind as a substance, and the belief of our identity, during our successive feelings, may be considered," he says, "as the same notion, expressed in different words." If this were correct, his statements, with regard to the necessity of memory, would also be correct. For though I can conceive of the notion of self, *i. e.* the notion of mind, as the *subject* of sensation, arising out of a *single* sensation, in the manner stated by Mr. Stewart, I cannot conceive that the notion of the *unchangeableness*, i. e. the identity of this *subject*, could be originated in this manner. To the conception of the identity, *i. e.* as I regard it, the unchangeableness of the mind, it seems obviously necessary that a change of state should be experienced.

We have, as yet, only described the *circumstances* in which the notion and belief of self arises. There remains the important inquiry, "how it comes to pass, that the recollection of one feeling, and the experience of another, should originate the notion?" Mr. Stewart says, it is by a law of the mind. Mr. Welsh tells us, that "it flows from a principle of intuition, of which no further account can be given, than that it forms a part of our constitution, and operates universally, immediately, and irresistibly, as often as we think of the past and the present." Dr. Brown adds, "that it is not the result of any series of propositions, but arises immediately, in certain circumstances," *i. e.* in the circumstances which have been described, "from a principle of thought, as

essential to the very nature of the mind, as its powers of perception, or memory, or as the power of reasoning itself, on the essential validity of which, and, consequently, on the intuitive belief of some first truth, on which it is founded, every objection to the force of these very truths themselves must ultimately rest."*

In fact, all that can be said on this subject is, that the mind has been so constituted by its Creator, that the notion of self, in the circumstances described by Dr. Brown, arises necessarily. We may regard this as an instinctive belief, and we are apt to consider it peculiarly inexplicable; yet it might not, perhaps, be difficult to show, that it does not differ essentially from every other case of belief; and, at any rate, it is not more mysterious than the phænomena of sensation, which are not thought by some to involve any difficulty. An impression is made upon an organ of sense—it is followed by a certain feeling or state of mind: now what can be said in this case, any more than in the other, but that God has so formed the mind, that, in certain circumstances, the sensation alluded to will be invariably experienced?

After the notion of self has arisen, the phrase, "I am conscious of a certain sensation," may be supposed to denote more than the mere existence of the sensation. In that case, it means that the permanent being, denoted by the words I and myself, and which is capable of existing in almost infinitely diversified states of feeling, is, at this moment, the subject of the particular state or sensation specified. Still the consciousness of the moment is nothing different from the feeling of the moment; the *I* merely denotes the mind as remaining, while all its feelings are evanescent.

* Vol. I. pp. 281, 282.

# CHAP. VI.

## ANALYSIS AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE MENTAL PHÆNOMENA.

THE susceptibilities or powers of the mind are, as we have seen, the mind itself, formed capable of existing in various states of thought and feeling. These susceptibilities can only be ascertained by actual observation, (as is the case with regard to the properties of physical substances)—by a careful examination of the actual sensations, thoughts, emotions, &c. of which we ourselves are conscious, or of whose existence in the minds of others, we have indubitable proof. These infinitely diversified states of mind, constituting the whole of the mental phænomena, are the sole objects of regard in this part, at least, of intellectual science. They are to the mental philosopher, what the various substances in the material universe are to the inquirer in natural science. They present themselves, also, for examination, in an analogous state of complexity and disarrangement; and they require, like them, to be reduced to their elementary parts, and arranged in classes, on principles both obvious and unexceptionable.

To this difficult and important work we now proceed. I have avoided the common phraseology, viz.

division of the powers of the mind, because though I admit there is an obvious distinction between the *susceptibilities and powers* of the mind, and the actual *phænomena* of the mind,—*i. e.* its varied states of thought and feeling,—it is not less manifest, as we have intimated, that the only method of classifying these powers, &c. is to classify the phænomena. The process to be instituted has a direct reference to the *actual states* of mind. These are to be analyzed, and arranged in classes, as referrible to different corresponding susceptibilities, or powers; so that, in fact, a classification of the mental phænomena, is a classification of the mental susceptibilities, &c.

In entering upon this subject, it should not be forgotten that the phænomena, concerning which we now inquire, are not only complex in their nature, in the sense in which this can be affirmed of any of the states of a simple indivisible essence, but incalculable in point of number. And since every state of mind indicates a corresponding susceptibility, we may adopt the statement of Dr. Brown, that "the susceptibilities of the mind, by which, in different circumstances, it may exist in these different states, are certainly as truly infinite as the space which surrounds us, or as that eternity which in its progress measures the successions of our feelings, and all the other changes in the universe." In consequence of that generalizing process, to which the phænomena of mind have been subjected, we are, indeed, exceedingly apt to conceive of those which we have arranged in the same class, as if the individuals, of which it consists, had no distinctive characters; yet it ought never to be forgotten that all our thoughts, and sensations, &c., how minute soever may be the shades of difference which exist amongst them, constitute so many distinct and separate states,

or affections, of mind. There are no *classes* of sensations, and thoughts, in the mind,—nothing is to be found there but *individual* thoughts, and sensations, as every object in the material world, is an individual object. We cannot alter the nature or condition of the phænomena themselves; but, possessing the faculty of perceiving resemblances, we can, after reducing those which are complex to the utmost degree of simplicity, arrange, and group, our individual thoughts and sensations. We can thus accomplish (in effect) what has been done, with so much benefit, in natural science, a very considerable part of which consists in classification. What is Natural History, but a science of arrangement? What is Chemistry, but a science of analysis, and arrangement?—sciences which have their foundation in the constitution of the mind; to which, it is as impossible to avoid comparing things together, and observing their agreement, or the contrary, as to remain ignorant of the form and colour, &c. of surrounding objects, when we have a distinct vision of them.

The science of Mental Philosophy, then, in as far at least as it relates to the classification of the mental phænomena, is built upon one of its own powers—that power by which we discover resemblance, or relation in general. Two, or more objects meet our view, and we not only perceive their individual properties, but become immediately sensible of their resemblance to each other, in a variety of respects. It is possible to conceive that the human mind might have been so constituted as not to be capable of recognizing this resemblance. In this case all science (if indeed anything worthy of the name of science could have existed) must have assumed a character differing essentially from that

which it bears at present—every thing like arrangement being entirely out of the question. Endowed, however, with this noble power, the resemblances, and relations in general, which it discovers to us, constitute so many directors in classification, by the practical guidance of which, assemblages of objects blended together apparently in the most hopeless confusion, are easily made to separate, and assume the utmost degree of order and regularity. Referring to this admirable power, and its influence in the classification of the mental phænomena, Dr. Brown says, "It begins by converting thousands, and more than thousands, into one, and reducing, in the same manner, the numbers thus formed, arrives at last at the few distinctive characters of those great comprehensive tribes, on which it ceases to operate, because there is nothing left to oppress the memory, or the understanding.*

Still it must be carefully borne in mind, that "classification has reference only to our mode of considering objects." It effects no alteration (as we have already said) in the phænomena of mind themselves. It places those together *in our conceptions*, which are felt to resemble each other. These we *regard* as distinct classes of affections, by an enumeration of which we define the mind. "It is that, we say, which perceives, remembers, compares, grieves, rejoices, loves, hates, &c." The terms, however, it must not be forgotten, are mere inventions of our own, and each of them "comprehends a variety of feelings, that are as truly different from each other, as the classes themselves are different." The process of classification may be conducted on different

* Vol. I. p. 353.

principles, and carried to a greater length by some, than by others; but those states of mind in which even no general circumstances of agreement can be discovered, must be arranged in different classes; and to these ultimate divisions, if we may so call them, or rather to the constitution of mind which they indicate, we give the name of Powers, or Susceptibilities of the mind.

It has been just stated that the process of classification may be conducted on different principles. This circumstance results from the variety of relations which objects bear to each other; relations, which strike various minds differently, in consequence of which they are led to adopt even opposite modes of arrangement. And it is an important remark of Dr. Brown, that the classification which actually approaches nearest to perfection, may not be that which seems, at first sight, most obvious; and he very admirably illustrates this observation, in its application to the phænomena of the mind, by the obvious principle of arrangement which would seem to be supplied by the three-fold natural division of our sensations, into those which are agreeable, painful, and indifferent. To a common observer this might appear a division as unexceptionable as it is obvious: it is far, however, from being such in reality. "For to take the pleasures and pains of sense," says the Doctor, "for instance; to what intelligible division could we reduce those which are not merely fugitive in themselves, but vary, from pain to pleasure, and from pleasure to pain, with a change of their external objects so slight often, as to be scarcely appreciable, and in many cases even when the external objects have continued exactly the same? How small and how variable a boundary separates the warmth that is pleasing from the heat which

pains! A certain quantity of light is grateful to the eye;—increase it, it becomes not indifferent,—though that would be a less change,—but absolutely painful: and if the eye be inflamed, even this small quantity of light, which was agreeable before, and which seemed, therefore, to admit of being very safely classed among the sources of pleasure, is now converted into a source of agony. Since it is impossible, therefore, to fix the limits of pain and pleasure; and every affection, or state of mind, agreeable, disagreeable, or indifferent, may, by a very trifling change of circumstances, be converted into an opposite state; it is evident that any classification, founded on this vague and transient distinction, must perplex and mislead us in our attempts to systematize the almost infinite diversities of thought and feeling, rather than give us any aid in the arrangement."*

Bearing some of the preceding remarks in memory, we shall not be surprised that different classifications of the mental phænomena have been suggested. Dr. Reid follows the mode which was regarded by him, at that time, as the most common; and traces all the mental phænomena to the powers of the *understanding* and the *will*. "Under the will," he adds, "we comprehend our active powers, and all that lead to action, or influence the mind to act; such as appetites, passions, affections, &c. The understanding comprehends our contemplative powers; by which we perceive objects; by which we conceive or remember them; by which we analyze or compound them; and by which we judge and reason concerning them."† He afterwards enumerates the following as constituting the only ones, which he thinks it necessary to explain:

* Vol. I. pp. 356-7. † Vol. I. p. 95.

1. The powers we have by means of our external senses.
2. Memory.
3. Conception.
4. The powers of resolving and analyzing complex objects, and compounding those that are more simple.
5. Judging.
6. Reasoning.
7. Taste.
8. Moral Perception.
9. Consciousness.

The foregoing enumeration, were it objectionable on no other grounds, appears defective in point of precision. What is meant, for instance, by the powers we have by means of our external senses? The phraseology is certainly very exceptionable. A mental power, in the sense in which the words have been explained, and in which they were used by Dr. Reid, may be dependent for its development upon an organ of sense; but the power resides *in* the mind; or rather it *is* the mind,—it is the constitution which its Creator has given to it. It is not *received* by *means* of the senses; and since the dissolution of the material part of our frame is not necessarily connected with the extinction of the mind, (unless indeed the doctrines of the Materialists and the Phrenologists should prove to be true,) it might remain after the body has crumbled into dust.

Mr. Stewart follows the division of Dr. Reid, varying his phraseology, and adding a third class:—of these, the

1st, Comprehends the intellectual powers; the

2d, The active and moral powers; and the

3d, Those which belong to man as the member of a political body.

It would seem as if Dr. Reid himself was not satisfied with that division of the powers of the mind, to which reference has just been made; though forgetting, partly at least, that the great business of the mental philosopher is to analyze and classify, he did not deem it necessary even to think of replacing it by another. He says, "it may be of use in order to a more methodical procedure;"—but cold approbation to bestow upon a division of such antiquity, and adopted also by himself!

To the perfection of any arrangement of the mental phænomena, it is necessary that there be a strongly marked line of demarcation between the respective classes under which they are arranged; and that all the phænomena be fairly included under one or another of them.

When we apply these rules to the division of the powers of the mind, followed by Dr. Reid, we find that both are transgressed. There is no broad line of distinction, he himself being judge, between the powers of the understanding and those of the will. He expressly guards us, indeed, against supposing, that in those operations which are ascribed to the understanding, there is no exertion of will or activity; or that the understanding is not employed in the operations ascribed to the will. He tells us, that so far is this from being the case, that there is no operation of the understanding, wherein the mind is not active in some degree; and no act of will which is not accompanied with some act of understanding.*

Why then, it may be asked, is not the old distinction between the powers of the understanding, and those of the will, abandoned, as a distinction without

* Vol. I. pp. 98, 99.

a difference? The fact is, that Dr. Reid is less self-inconsistent here than his own words would seem to imply. Though the understanding is involved, in his opinion, in an act of will, and the will involved in an operation of the understanding, they are still, according to his doctrine, *separately* though *jointly* exercised. The will which is active, directs the understanding which is not active; so that the mind, in consequence of this direction, may be said to be active in every such operation of the understanding. In cases in which the understanding is not directed by the will, the mind, on his principles, is not active in an operation of the understanding. Now if in *involuntary* thinking and comparing, (and that we do involuntarily think and compare is manifest,) the mind is not active, how can it be imagined to be so, when the thinking is induced by the will? Surely the *act of thinking* must in this respect be the same, whether it be voluntary or involuntary; the mind cannot well be conceived to be active in the former, and passive in the latter case. The activity of the mind must cease, according to Dr. Reid's doctrine, even in cases where an operation of the understanding is directed by the will—cease with the volition which impelled it; so that in an operation of the understanding, the mind is, in all cases, passive. In this way only, as it appears to me, can the consistency of those who adopt Dr. Reid's classification be defended.

In thus vindicating their consistency, we however involve them, perhaps, in greater difficulties. For if the activity of the mind ceases with the volition, by which the subsequent operation of the understanding was directed, (and if it does not cease, the propriety of their division of the mental phænomena must be abandoned,) it follows that the mind is inactive in

perceiving, comparing, judging, &c.; and active, when it exists in any of the states denominated appetites, passions, affections, &c. which are said to belong to the active powers; *i. e.* (for such is the strange doctrine which seems to be necessarily involved in this statement,) the mind is passive when it *thinks*, and active when it *feels!* And, if this be the case, why does Dr. Reid talk of an *act* of the understanding—*operations* of the understanding? Might he not with equal propriety talk of an *act* of sensation, on the ground that an individual had resorted to voluntary and active means to secure its existence?

This doctrine of Dr. Reid and Mr. Stewart, of the passivity of the mind in its intellectual states and exercises, in contradistinction from its other states, is proved by Dr. Brown, with resistless power of argument, to be unfounded. "In whatever manner we define the term active, is the mind," he asks, "more active when it merely desires good and fears evil,—when it looks with esteem on virtue, and with indignation, or disgust, or contempt, on vice, than when it pursues a continued train of reasoning, or fancy, or historical investigation?" "Surely," he adds, "when it records the warning lessons of the past, or expatiates in fields which itself creates, of fairy beauty or sublimity, or comprehends whole moving worlds within its glance, and calculates and measures infinitude;—the mind is active, or there are no moments in which it is so!"*

In further support of this general statement, the same writer adds, "It is only when some intellectual energy co-exists with desire, that the mind is said to be active, even by those who are unaccustomed to

* Vol. I. p. 359.

metaphysical nomenclature. Passion is active only when, with intellectual action, it compares means with ends, and deliberates, resolves, and executes. Ambition acts by prompting to the devising of means for gratifying its insatiable appetite. As a passion, it is the mere desire of power or glory. It is in the intellectual part of the process that the mind is active; for it is only intellectually, with the exception of the production of muscular motion, that the mind can act. To class the active powers, therefore, as distinct from the intellectual, he adds, is to class them as opposed to that without which, as active powers, they cannot even exist."*

It must not be forgotten that the language of Dr. Brown here regards the mental phænomena, *as they are in themselves;* it does not consider them in relation to the faculties which they may call into action. Whatever sense be attached to the term active, the mind must be as active in an operation of the understanding (to employ the language commonly used on this subject) as in an operation of the will. In fact, however, it will be found difficult, if not impossible, to attach any definite ideas to the terms activity and passivity, when employed in reference to different states of mind, *as they are in themselves.* Much false conception, it is believed, or rather want of conception, prevails upon this subject. The mind is usually said to be passive in sensation, (though this is at variance with Dr. Reid's classification,) and active in admiring, loving, &c. We ask, what is meant by passivity and activity here? If it be replied, that we are passive in sensation, because sensation is not the result of volition—that the mind cannot but feel, &c.; we reply, that admiring, loving, &c. are not invariably

* Vol. I. pp. 359, 360.

even *indirectly* the result of volition, and that they are never *directly* so; that, in many cases at least, we might perhaps say in all cases, the mind cannot but admire, love, &c. Where then is the difference? If it be alleged that admiring, loving, &c. prompt to action, &c.; we answer, so does sensation. It is admitted that love to an object will produce desire and exertion to secure it; but, in the same manner, the sensation of pain will awaken desire of relief, and lead to the adoption of measures to obtain it. Where then is the difference? If it be alleged that there is an essential difference in the states of mind themselves,—that the state, or affection designated by the word sensation, is in itself essentially passive, while the state or affection designated by the term love, admiration, &c. is essentially active;—we answer, it may be so, for any thing we know to the contrary, but that we do not understand the assertion. It will be found impossible, we believe, to attach any definite signification to the terms activity and passivity, in their application to states or affections of the mind, except this, that the passive states are produced, and that the active states are the producers of others, or of some change upon the body. And, if this be true, there is not a single mental affection in which the mind may not be both active and passive; *i. e.* there is not a single state which may not be both a cause and an effect. Sensation is produced; it does not arise spontaneously; it produces, also, some other state. Admiration, belief, love, volition, &c. are *produced;* they can no more arise spontaneously, *i. e.* exist without a cause, than sensation, and like it they *produce* some other state.

The term activity, then, has no meaning when applied to any state of mind, but in reference to

its results. But though it should be admitted that all the mental phænomena may be active, inasmuch as they may become the antecedents of certain changes, are not some of them, it may be asked, more especially entitled to the name of active powers, on the ground that to them must be ultimately traced all the bustle, and vigour, and animation, which we see around us? This is denied by Dr. Brown. "In what sense," says he, "can it be said that joy and grief lead to action, even indirectly, more than any other feelings, or states, in which the mind is capable of existing? We *may*, indeed, act when we are joyful or sorrowful, as we may act when we perceive a present object, or remember the past; but we may also remain at rest, and remain equally at rest, in the one case as in the other. Our intellectual energies, indeed, even in this sense, as indirectly leading to action, are, in most cases, far more active than sorrow, even in its very excesses of agony and despair; and in those cases in which sorrow does truly lead to action, as when we strive to remedy the past, the mere regret that constitutes the sorrow is not so closely connected with the conduct which we pursue, as the intellectual states of mind that intervened—the successive judgments by which we have compared projects with projects, and chosen at last the plan which, in relation to the object in view, has seemed to us, upon the whole, the most expedient."*

It may, perhaps, be doubted whether Dr. Brown's reasoning does full justice to this argument in support of Dr. Reid's classification. Conceding to Dr. Brown, that our intellectual states of mind are the more immediate, or the proximate cause of action, it might

* Vol. I. p. 361.

be contended, that those affections which belong to the order of feeling, constitute the radical and ultimate cause. Is it not apparent, indeed, that what Dr. Reid classes with our active powers—our appetites, passions, desires, &c., are the springs, so to speak, which keep the whole machinery of the mind in motion? There would be no intellectual activity were there no curiosity, no desire, no susceptibility of pleasure, or of pain. It may be true, that sorrow was not so directly connected with the conduct which we pursued, as the intellectual states that intervened; but then, without this sorrow, these intellectual states themselves would not have intervened. There would have been no comparison of project with project—no prosecution of the plan of which he speaks. Were we possessed of nothing but intellect, life would be a dull, monotonous, insipid, and wearisome calm. In fact, it is the best argument in defence of this old division of the mental powers, that those states of mind which are classed with the active powers, are, in cases in which action is the result, generally speaking, the radical and ultimate cause of it.

Still, however, this division is imperfect, because some of the phænomena which are classed with the active powers, and which must be classed with them, do not always lead to action. They are accordingly destitute, in this case, of the essential characteristic of their class.

The classification of Dr. Reid transgresses also the other canon with reference to arrangement: it does not include *all* the mental phænomena. There are some states of mind which cannot well be said to belong either to the understanding, or the will—to the intellectual, or active powers. To which department shall

we assign the feelings of acquiescence, satisfaction, and a variety of others of a similar kind?

It may, also, be further objected against any such division of the powers of the mind, that it is adapted to perpetuate those false views of the nature of those powers, to which such frequent reference has been made. "No sooner," says Dr. Brown, "were certain affections of the mind classed together, as belonging to the will, and certain others as belonging to the understanding, than the understanding and the will ceased to be considered as the same individual substance, and became immediately, as it were, two opposite and contending powers in the empire of mind, as distinct as any two sovereigns with their separate nations under their control; and it became an object of as fierce contention to determine, whether certain affections of the mind belonged to the understanding or the will, as in the management of political affairs, to determine whether a disputed province belonged to one potentate or to another. Every new diversity of the faculties of the mind, indeed, converted each faculty into a little independent mind."*

Dissatisfied with all previous arrangements, Dr. Brown presents us with one entirely original. The reader will observe that it is in harmony with the leading principles of his system, viz. that the business of the intellectual philosopher is to analyze, and classify, the phænomena of mind; which phænomena are to be no otherwise regarded than as the mind itself in various states of thought and feeling.

The following statement of the classes, and orders, in which he arranges the mental phænomena, is taken from his Physiology:

* Vol. I. pp. 365, 366.

"Of these states or affections of mind, when we consider them in all their variety, there is one physical distinction that cannot fail to strike us. Some of them arise in consequence of the operation of external things—the others in consequence of mere previous feelings of the mind itself. In this difference, then, of their antecedents (*i. e.* as being external or internal,) we have a ground of primary division. The phænomena may be arranged as of two classes,—THE EXTERNAL AFFECTIONS OF THE MIND; THE INTERNAL AFFECTIONS OF THE MIND.

"The *former* of these classes admits of very easy subdivision, according to the bodily organs affected.

"The *latter* may be divided into two orders; Intellectual states of mind, and Emotions. These orders, which are sufficiently distinct of themselves, exhaust, as it appears to me, the whole phænomena of the class."*

The following is a more full and methodical statement of this arrangement:

## DIVISION I.

*THE EXTERNAL AFFECTIONS OF THE MIND.*

### ORDER I.

THE LESS DEFINITE EXTERNAL AFFECTIONS.

CLASS I.
Appetites: such as Hunger, &c.

CLASS II.
Muscular Pains.

CLASS III.
Muscular Pleasures.

### ORDER II.

THE MORE DEFINITE EXTERNAL AFFECTIONS.

CLASS I.
Sensations of Smell.

CLASS II.
Sensations of Taste.

CLASS III.
Sensations of Hearing.

CLASS IV.
Sensations of Touch.

CLASS V.
Sensations of Sight.

* P. 41—43.

## DIVISION II.

*THE INTERNAL AFFECTIONS OF THE MIND.*

ORDER I.
INTELLECTUAL STATES OF MIND.

CLASS I.
Simple Suggestions,
Suggestions of Resemblance,
Contrast, Contiguity.

CLASS II.
Relative Suggestions, or Feelings of Relation.

*Species* 1.
Relations of Co-existence,
Position, Resemblance, Degree,
Proportion, Comprehensiveness.

*Species* 2.
Relations of Succession.

ORDER II.
EMOTIONS; SUCH AS LOVE, &c.

CLASS I.
Immediate Emotions.

CLASS II.
Retrospective Emotions.

*Species* 1.
Retrospective Emotions, having relation to others.

*Species* 2.
Retrospective Emotions, having reference to ourselves.

CLASS III.
Prospective Emotions.

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With reference to this classification of the mental phænomena, I perfectly concur in opinion with the biographer of Dr. Brown, that it is "original, simple, distinct, and complete. The division into external and internal affections is natural and obvious. Not less so is the distinction he makes with reference to the internal affections; for intellectual states and emotions are felt by us as generically different, and must always thus be felt by us." The arrangement is also, in its leading particulars, complete; for to know all our sensitive states or affections—all our intellectual states—and all our emotions, is "to know all the states or phænomena of the mind." In the minor subdivisions Dr. Brown's classification may be susceptible of improvement; but the leading divisions seem

so much in accordance to nature, that, with the Rev. Mr. Welsh, I cannot anticipate the time when another shall be suggested so worthy of adoption.

I would not, however, be understood as expressing full approbation of the phraseology of the first general division, viz. "the external affections of the mind." I am well aware that the concluding words will sufficiently indicate, to those who are accustomed to think on such subjects, that the adjective "external," is merely intended to suggest, that the *cause* of these affections is *out of the mind.* It may, however, be misunderstood. It may lead some to imagine, that there are affections which are not *in* the mind—that sensation is in the organ, &c.; and on that account, I am disposed to regret that some other mode of designation was not employed by this writer; yet as the matter is of subordinate importance—and as an uniform nomenclature, in intellectual science, as well as in physical, is very desirable, it is not my intention to deviate from it in the subsequent discussions.

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## DIVISION I.

*INCLUDING THE EXTERNAL AFFECTIONS OF THE MIND.*

This division of the mental phænomena comprehends, it must be recollected, all those affections of mind which are immediately subsequent upon certain states of the body, and particularly of what are called the organs of sense, and which are never found but in connexion with those states of the body to which we have referred. Such is the constitution of the mind, that when certain states of the material fabric, with which it is connected, exist, certain affections

of mind are experienced; and to these states of mind we give the name of *external* affections, because the cause of their existence is something *ad extra.*

Of external affections there are, according to Dr. Brown's arrangement, which we propose to follow, two orders; viz.

## Order I.

### INCLUDING THE LESS DEFINITE EXTERNAL AFFECTIONS.

This order of the external affections comprehends all those mental affections which result from certain states of *any part* of the material fabric, with the exception of *the organs of sense.* By the aid of this exception, we are enabled to distinguish them from sensations, properly so called, which, as we shall shortly see, are states of mind originated by impressions npon *the organs of sense.* Dr. Brown, indeed, says, that the less definite external affections are *sensations,* as well as the more definite affections of this division, because they arise from a certain state of the body. In using this language, however, he speaks incautiously. It is at variance with his own statements. An organ of sense is the *external* termination of a nerve which proceeds from the brain, and is, indeed, an elongation of it. A sensation, as the word imports, is a mental affection arising from an affection of an organ of sense. A state of mind originated by an affection of any part of the body, which does not constitute an organ of sense, cannot then be a sensation; though, as its cause is *ad extra,* it must be an external affection of mind. In this order of our feelings are to be classed,

1. Our various appetites, such as hunger, thirst, &c.; or rather, that "elementary uneasiness," which

constitutes a part of them; for it must surely be apparent that these appetites are complex feelings; that the appetite of hunger, for instance, consists of an uneasy feeling, and a desire to obtain relief from it. The elementary uneasiness is, doubtless, the result of a certain state of the body; and the accompanying desire of relief arises, by a law of the mind, which would certainly originate a similar feeling in any other case of want or suffering. There is nothing peculiar in the pain which constitutes one element of our appetites; there is nothing peculiar in the desire which constitutes the other. Why, then, should the pain and desire co-existing, be thought to require a particular designation, and to constitute what is called a power of mind in this case, and not in others? A man falls into a pit; his situation is painful; it originates the desire of relief. Why should we not say he has the *appetite* of ascending, as well as that we have the *appetite* of hunger? It will be replied, perhaps, that the complex feeling, denominated hunger, recurs at regular intervals, and that, on this account, it ought to be regarded as being specifically distinct from any accidental case, in which there is an union of pain and desire. But what is the reason of this regular recurrence of the appetite? Is it not that God has so formed the body, that it is, at these intervals, in that state which is necessary to the existence of the elementary uneasiness involved in appetite? This we suppose will be admitted. And should it be so, how can it be thought that that circumstance can impress a peculiar character upon the mental feeling itself? Suppose the individual, referred to a short time ago, should fall into the pit at regular intervals; that the result should invariably be bodily pain, and desire of relief; would

the circumstance of the accident happening habitually, and regularly, convert this complex mental feeling into an appetite? This will not be pretended. And yet the reply of our opponents ought to be in the affirmative.

Dr. Reid has admitted the correctness of the preceding analysis of appetite. "Every appetite," he says, "is accompanied with an uneasy sensation proper to it; in the appetite of hunger, for instance, there are two ingredients—an uneasy sensation, and a desire to eat, which arise and perish together." Surely, then, as there is nothing peculiar either in the pain or the desire, the *former* should be classed with our other *sensations* (*i. e.* on his principles), and the latter with our other *desires*. Their habitual union produces no change in their nature, and cannot entitle the complex feeling to be considered as the result of a distinct and original power of the mind—the light in which it is represented by Dr. Reid.

The circumstance which has operated, more than any other, to prevent the reception of the foregoing statements, is, that the desire is invariably and *immediately* successive to the uneasiness. We are apt, accordingly, to conceive of them as constituting but one feeling, or affection of mind; and this tendency is strengthened by the fact of their having received but one name. In themselves they are, however, as different, says Dr. Brown, "as if no such succession took place; as different as the pleasure of music is from the mere desire of hearing it again; or as the pain of excessive heat, in burning, from the subsequent desire of coolness. There is, therefore, no reason that we should consider the elementary pain itself as different in kind from all our other pains; it is evidently a sensation, as much as any other

internal bodily pain that we feel; a state or affection of the mind, arising immediately and solely from a state or affection of the body, which is the only definition that can be given of a sensation."*

It is not wished to discontinue the use of the word appetite. As the feelings which the term denotes recur at regular intervals, and are distinguished by that circumstance from other co-existing pains and desires, it is convenient to have a distinct name by which to designate them; but we must guard against supposing that the term denotes an original power of mind.

I must not pass from this subject without noticing the vague statements of Dr. Reid with regard to our appetites. "Every appetite," he says, "is *accompanied* with an uneasy sensation proper to it," *i. e.* the uneasy sensation is *not* the appetite; for the companion of a thing cannot be the thing itself. He immediately adds, however, "If we attend to the appetite of hunger, we shall find in it two ingredients, *an uneasy sensation*, and a desire to eat;" *i. e.* the uneasy sensation *is* the appetite, or a constituent part of it, and *not* its companion merely. An appetite then consists of *two* parts. And yet, he immediately adds, "that appetite in an infant *is* only *one* of these parts;" for in them, he says, "there is no desire." And he concludes the whole with the words, "That the appetite of hunger includes the *two* ingredients I have mentioned, *will not, I apprehend, be questioned!*" though he had himself denied it but the moment before!†

Mr. Stewart, in treating of appetites, says, "they take their rise from the body; they are occasional;

* *Vide* p. 83. † Vol. III. pp. 145, 146.

*they are accompanied with an uneasy sensation,* &c." He does not directly state what they are; but his language necessarily implies, that the uneasy sensation is not one of their ingredients. It would seem as if he considered the desire, of which Dr. Reid speaks, as constituting exclusively the appetite,—a sentiment which involves, unless there be a difference of judgment between him and Dr. Reid on the case of infants, the opinion, that infants are destitute of appetite altogether.*

I have no doubt that the want of precision, which the statements of these writers occasionally display, results from their opinion of the comparative unimportance of mental analysis. Having specified several benevolent affections, Mr. Stewart says, " he does not state them as *ultimate facts* in our constitution—that several may be analyzed into the same general principles—but that this (notwithstanding the stress which has been sometimes laid upon it) *is chiefly a question of arrangement.*"† This language argues, it is humbly conceived, an erroneous conception of the object of intellectual science. In physical science " we endeavour to resolve the particular properties of bodies into the general qualities of matter." In like manner we should aim, in intellectual science, to resolve particular states or affections of mind, into those " simple and primitive laws, by which term we denote the most general circumstances in which the phænomena are felt by us to agree." In other words, we should endeavour to discover what are " ultimate facts," as Mr. Stewart calls them, in the mental constitution; what are the " ingredients," if we may use that language, of individual states of mind; what

* Vide Outlines, pp. 82, 83. † Ibid. p. 99.

portions of these ingredients are common to other states, and what are peculiar to the individuals; that we may thus arrive at the knowledge of the elements of Mind, as the chemist aims to discover the elements of the bodies by which he is surrounded in the world of matter. Mental science will remain comparatively uninteresting and profitless, till more is attempted generally in the way of analysis,—a field of investigation, into which, it is hoped, the splendid success of Dr. Brown will induce many to enter. What can be more barren than the statements of Mr. Stewart himself on the subject of appetite?—a barrenness which is solely to be ascribed to the absence of all attempt to analyze. Appetites, he tells us, rise from the body—are occasional—are accompanied with an uneasy sensation—are three in number, &c.—are not selfish—are both natural and acquired! This is actually the amount of Mr. Stewart's section on this subject. It comprises all that can be said upon it, by any one who writes upon Mr. Stewart's principles, *i. e.* it tells us what we, and all men, most perfectly know. How different the statements even of Dr. Reid, and especially of Dr. Brown! What we call an appetite is a complex feeling; but its particular "ingredients," or parts, resolve themselves into the general properties of Mind, as the weight of gold resolves itself into the general quality of gravity. An appetite may be analyzed into an uneasy feeling, and a desire to be delivered from it; but there is nothing peculiar either in the pain or the desire. An appetite is not then an element—not a simple and original power of the mind—and has no title to be ranked amongst the number of its distinct susceptibilities.

The wisdom and goodness of the Great Author of our

frame, are especially apparent in the provision he has made for the regular recurrence of that complex state of mind to which we give the name of appetite. We can illustrate this statement in reference to one of them only. The waste of strength, to which the animal frame is necessarily exposed, can only be repaired by a regular supply of nourishment adapted to its state and wants. Some means must, accordingly, be resorted to by the Creator, to secure the taking of this nourishment. Now, if the appetites of hunger and of thirst did not exist, what security could we possess that the fruits of his bounty would not be neglected? What rule should we have to direct us what quantity of food to take, and how frequently? "Though a man knew," says Dr. Reid, "that his life must be supported by eating, reason could not direct him *when* to eat, or *what;* how much, or how often. In all these things, appetite is a much better guide than reason." Or, if it be admitted that experience might, in process of time, furnish a rule, would it not, in all probability, without the spur and impulse of appetite, be in danger of constant violation? "Were reason only to direct us in this matter, its calmer voice would often be drowned in the hurry of business, or the charms of amusement. But the voice of appetite rises gradually, and at last becomes loud enough to call off our attention from any other employment."* "If indeed," adds Dr. Brown, "the necessary supply were long neglected, the morbid state of the body which would ensue, though no pain of actual hunger were to be felt, would convince, at last, the sufferer of his folly. But the providence of our gracious Creator has not trusted the existence of man to

* *Vide* Vol. III. p. 147.

the dangerous admonition of so rough a monitor, which might, perhaps, bring his folly before him, only when it was *too late to be wise*. The pain of hunger—that short disease, which it is in our power so speedily to cure, prevents diseases that more truly deserve the name."*

But eating is not the mere removal of pain or "disease;" it is the source of pleasure: a circumstance which has been most properly referred to by Archdeacon Paley, as an unequivocal manifestation of the goodness of God. "Assuming," says this luminous writer, "the necessity of food for the support of animal life, it is necessary that the animal be provided with organs fitted for the procuring, receiving, and digesting of its prey. It may be necessary also that the animal be impelled by its sensations to exert its organs. But the pain of hunger would do all this. Why add pleasure to the act of eating, sweetness and relish to food? Why a new and appropriate sense for the perception of pleasure? Why should the juice of a peach, applied to the palate, affect the part so differently from what it does when rubbed upon the palm of the hand? This is a constitution which, as it appears to me, can be resolved into nothing but the pure benevolence of the Creator. Eating is necessary; but the pleasure attending it is not necessary; it is superadded to what is strictly essential, and can only have flowed from the goodness of God."*

Should it be objected that this accompanying pleasure exposes us to the danger of excess, it may be replied, that the Creator has provided against this, by rendering it painful to continue the supply of food, in any great proportion, after the demands of nature have

* Vol. I. p. 394. † *Vide* Nat. Theol. pp. 518, 519.

been adequately satisfied. No better barrier of a moral nature (and moral agents must be ruled by moral means) could have been set up; and, in most cases, it is sufficiently strong: so that to adopt the beautiful illustration of Dr. Brown, "Between satiety on the one hand, and want on the other, the stream of health flows tranquilly along, which, but for these boundaries, would speedily waste itself and disappear; as the most magnificent river, which, if dispersed over a boundless plain, would flow almost into nothing, owes its abundance and majestic beauty to the very banks which seem to confine its waters within too narrow a channel."*

In the order of less definite external affections, Dr. Brown classes,

2dly, Those affections of mind which result from certain conditions of any of the muscles of the body: for though we find it difficult to ascribe them to any local organ (on which account they ought not to be called sensations),† yet they require for their immediate antecedents certain states of some part or parts of the animal frame, and therefore are *external* affections, *i. e.* states of mind produced by certain states of the body. To this class belong

*Muscular pleasures.* In *early life,* the constant and rapid action of the muscles is a source of high gratification; it forms, indeed, a chief part of the delight which is experienced by the young of all species of living beings. "They seem to me," says Paley, "to receive pleasure simply from the exercise of their limbs, and bodily faculties, without reference to any end to be attained, or any use to be answered by the exertion."‡ In middle age, it is from less

* P. 394. † *Vide* p. 83. ‡ Nat. Theol. pp. 492-3.

violent muscular action that pleasure can be derived; and in advanced life, repose becomes to us, bending under the weight of years, what alacrity and action are to us in childhood.

*Muscular pains,* also, belong to this class. The motion of any limb, to which the action of many muscles is necessary, cannot be continued for a considerable length of time without great uneasiness; and few feelings are more distressing than that which is occasioned by muscular relaxation, after the parts had been long kept in a state of tension. The acute pain, accompanying our return to an upright position, after long-continued stooping, has been experienced by all.

To the same class, also, Dr. Brown refers the various organic feelings which constitute the animal pleasure of good health, when every corporeal function is exercised in just degree. "This pleasure," he justly observes, "is certainly more, even at all times, than mere freedom from pain, though it is experienced with the greatest zest, after the habit of enjoyment has been long broken by disease."

## ORDER II.

### OF THE EXTERNAL AFFECTIONS, COMPRISING OUR SENSATIONS.

It is impossible to suggest a better definition of the word Sensations, than that which is given us by Dr. Brown. "Sensations," says he, "are those states of mind, however various they may be, which immediately succeed the changes of state produced in any of our organs of sense, by the presence of external objects." The definition takes it for granted, it will be observed, that we have a body, and bodily organs, and that there are external objects to act upon them; *i. e.* it takes for granted the existence of an external

world. In what manner our knowledge and belief of something external to our own minds arise, will be shewn afterwards. It is merely necessary now to observe, that the term sensation includes only that class of our feelings which are conceived by us to result from the influence of something *ad extra.*

Assuming, then, as we do for the present, the existence of the body, and the organs of sense, the best mode of classifying our sensations is, to arrange those together which are received through the medium of the same organ; for though there may, perhaps, be sensations of the same sense, which differ from each other as widely as others which are received through different channels, "if we quit," as Dr. Brown says, "that obvious line of distinction, which the difference of organs affords, we shall not find it easy to define them by other lines as precise."

It will, therefore, be necessary to consider separately the sensations of Smell, Taste, Hearing, Touch, and Sight: before we proceed to do this, however, it will be expedient to lay before the reader some general remarks with reference to the nature and process of Sensation.

I. Our first observation then is, that *all sensation is in the mind.* Were not this the case, it would not be the object of intellectual science; it is, accordingly, affirmed in the definition adopted from Dr. Brown, that sensations are *those states of mind,* &c. &c. This remark is opposed, in the

*First place,* to the sentiments of those who imagine, or appear to imagine, that sensation is in the organ of sense. The common arguments by which the immateriality of the mind is proved, render it manifest, that feeling cannot reside in the organ which is material. If the contrary were the case, a sensation

must necessarily be divisible, since the organ is so; but to conceive of the half or the quarter of a sensation, is a manifest absurdity. The power of thinking is universally admitted (always excepting the Materialists) to reside in the mind; while (as it is conceived by some) the susceptibility of sensation may have its seat in the body. There is, however, no difference in this respect. It is as easy to conceive that matter can think, as that it can feel. In either case the notion is absurd. The organs of sense are, indeed, necessary to sensation. God has so formed the mind, that it never can exist in any of those states to which we give the general name of sensation, except when what we call an impression is made upon one or other of those organs; but the feeling itself can have its seat no where but in mind.

The general statement now made is very ably illustrated by Dr. Reid. He, indeed, uses the term Perception; but there is no difference in this respect between perception and sensation. "We must not confound," says he, "the organs of perception with the being that perceives."—"The eye is not that which sees, it is only the organ by which we see. The ear is not that which hears, but the organ by which we hear; and so of the rest."—"A man cannot see the satellites of Jupiter, but by a telescope. Does he conclude from this, that it is the telescope that sees those stars? By no means; such a conclusion would be absurd. It is no less absurd to conclude, that it is the eye that sees, or the ear that hears. The telescope is an artificial organ of sight, but it sees not. The eye is a natural organ of sight, by which we see; but the natural organ sees as little as the artificial."*

* *Vide* Vol. I. p. 115.

The sentiment thus opposed by Dr. Reid, has been proved to be inconsistent with the immateriality of the mind; it is not less at variance, as he proceeds to show, with its identity. If it be the eye that sees, the ear that hears, and so on, and not the mind, the thinking principle is not one but many. "When I say, I see, I hear, I feel, I remember," says Dr. R., "this implies that it is one and the same self that performs all these operations. And as it would be absurd to say that my memory, another man's imagination, and a third man's reason, may make one individual intelligent being, it would be equally absurd to say, that one piece of matter seeing, another hearing, and a third feeling, may make one and the same percipient being."*

But is not this doctrine, it will be objected, in direct opposition to the common sense of men? Have we not the evidence of consciousness that sensation is in the organ, and not in the mind? Is not the pain of a wound felt to be in the limb which is injured? so that, unless the limb be the seat of the mind, which no one imagines, this doctrine of Reid cannot be true.

To this objection, which I have stated as strongly as possible, it has been usual to reply, in substance at least, "that we do not really *feel* the pain to be in the organ; that our knowledge of the seat of a wound is not gained from the mere sensation, since children cannot distinguish the precise place of their bodies which is affected by the touch of any external object; nay, that even an adult, pricked with a pin on any part of his body, which he has seldom handled, and never seen, will not readily put his finger upon

* Vol. I. p. 116.

the wound, nor even at first come very near to it; that, consequently, our knowledge of the locality of any impression made upon the body, is the mere result of experience; so that we can no more be said to feel the place of a wound, than to hear the distance, or nearness, or direction, of a sound; knowledge which none but the vulgar now conceive of as being derived from any source but experience." The sentiments just expressed have long been held by the most judicious metaphysicians. Dr. Brown maintains, that the painful sensations resulting from puncture, and laceration, would not even have given us the knowledge of our corporeal frame, far less the knowledge of the particular part affected; that they are to be regarded, in this point of view, only as equivalent to our sensations of heat and cold, which, without the experience of other sensations, would no more have been conceived to arise directly from a corporeal cause, than our feelings of joy or sorrow.*

But though the objector should concede that originally, or antecedently to experience, the sensation produced by puncture would not be referred to the particular part affected, he might still urge, that it is so referred at present,—that at any rate *now* the pain appears to be in the limb, or rather, that it is the limb which appears to be the subject of the pain; so that, unless consciousness deceive us, the sensation is not in the mind. I answer, that the seat of the sensation must surely be now what it always has been. It is easy to conceive that experience may have *added* something to the original feeling, but not that it has *transferred* the sensation from the mind, which was its primitive seat, to the limb, which

* Vol. I. p. 487.

was confessedly not so. Consciousness only tells us what is in the mind—what we feel, not what is the cause of our feelings. Now it is not denied that, in adult age at least, we feel *as if the pain were in the limb.* It is not the province of consciousness to inform us *where* the pain is, but where it *appears* to us to be. And consciousness cannot be said to deceive us, unless our actual feelings, and its testimony concerning them, should be at variance, which, when the previous statements are recollected, will be immediately seen to be absurd and impossible. Can it be truly said that consciousness deceives us, when, by the art of the ventriloquist, the sound, which really proceeds from his mouth, is felt by us as if it issued from our own pocket,—or when, after the amputation of a limb, we feel as if we experienced pain in the extirpated member? Surely not; because we do actually feel, and do not merely imagine that we feel, *as if that were the case;* and consciousness only informs us, as we have said, of our feelings. It may be observed by the way, that the latter of the cases just adduced, proves, beyond all possibility of doubt, that the actual seat of a sensation may not be where it appears to our feelings to be; and, therefore, though we should concede, which however we do not, that the pain of a puncture, or laceration, is always felt at the exact spot at which the injury is sustained, it would not follow that its actual seat is not the mind.

Our knowledge of the part affected is derived from experience, in the same way as we gain our information of the distance of a visual, and the direction of a sonorous, object. The mental feeling was originally different, when different parts of the body are affected. The knowledge of this difference is speedily gained; and when we say the pain is in the hand or the foot,

we do no more in fact than express a rapid judgment, the result of experience, that the sensation of which we speak proceeds from an injury sustained in one or other of those members. Still the sensation is in the mind, and can be no where else: and the provision which the Creator has made, to secure the certain existence of this judgment, displays his goodness. Did not that provision exist, we should be exposed to the greatest danger. In some cases, a whole limb might be consumed, ere we discovered the external cause of the agony we endured. God has, therefore, so constituted the mind, that the feeling is originally different when the parts of the body which sustain the injury are different; so that the pain appears to us as if it were in the hand, or the toe, which, in regard to its practical use, is the same thing precisely as if it were actually there.

*Secondly,* I oppose the observation that all sensation is in the mind, to those who refer it to what they call the animal, in contradistinction from the rational, soul. It is not an unusual opinion that there are three distinct principles in man—the *material* principle, which connects him with the inanimate world,—the *animal* principle, which is common to him with the brutes,—and the *immaterial or spiritual* principle, which, being of a higher order, allies him to the Deity. It is to the *second* of these principles, which is not regarded as immaterial, that sensation is ascribed by those who maintain the opinion to which reference is now made; so that sensation is not in the mind, properly so called, but in that part of our nature which supports the functions of animal life.

It appears to me that true philosophy knows nothing of this supposed intermediate principle,—a principle which is neither matter nor mind, but an unnatural

and monstrous mixture of both. It will be found in vain to plead, in support of its existence, the language of Scripture, because the phraseology of the apostle, "body, soul, and spirit," was employed, in consequence of its accordance with the reigning philosophy; and, if it be regarded as authority on this point, we must, for a similar reason, discard the Newtonian system of astronomy, and adopt the clumsy hypothesis of the Ptolemaics, that the sun revolves round this little speck of earth. There are, it is imagined, only two principles in our nature—matter and mind; the latter being the seat of all sensation and thought; and the former, as essentially incapable of either, as the earth on which we tread. The addition of what is called a principle of animal life, to explain the vital phænomena, is, I apprehend, the introduction of a cause to account for certain appearances, which appearances are as inexplicable, after the introduction of the supposed cause, as they were before it. To me it has long appeared that the only conceivable principle of animal life, is the mysterious union of mind, with a certain organized bodily frame. Life commences with the formation of this union; it is extinguished on its dissolution. It certainly follows, from this statement, that brute animals, as well as men, possess mind, or an immaterial principle; a sentiment which cannot be rejected without embracing the dogmas of materialism. It is true that the mind of irrational creatures is of a nature inferior to that of man; and not destined, like the latter, to immortality. But that brutes possess mind, and that mind is the seat of sensation, is as true of them, as it is of man himself.

II. The second general observation concerning sensation is, that the term is restricted in its application to those states of mind which *directly* result from

certain changes in the organs of sense, or in its widest range, to such as are the immediate result of some bodily change. To express the same sentiment in different words, sensations are those states of mind which require, for their *immediate* antecedent, some external or material cause. The mind is susceptible of innumerable feelings which are not sensations, because their *immediate* antecedents are certain previous states of the mind itself. Hence it is unphilosophical to talk of the sensations of joy or sorrow, though of these feelings we have a very distinct consciousness.

There is a want of precision, in the manner in which this term is sometimes employed, that tends to confound things which essentially differ from each other. Dr. Reid sometimes uses it to denote all the varieties of our feelings, without any reference to their causes, as either external or internal. "Although," says he, "the present subject leads us to consider only the sensations which we have by means of our external senses,"* &c.—language which implies that there may be sensations which are not by means of the external senses. And again, "Every thing we call happiness, pleasure, or enjoyment, on the one hand, and on the other, every thing we call misery, pain or uneasiness, is sensation or feeling."† From these examples, especially the last, it is manifest that Dr. Reid did not sufficiently discriminate the class of feelings which the term properly designates; for "it is not applicable to all the varieties of our consciousness," says Dr. Brown, "but to those particular varieties which are immediately successive to certain affections of our organs of sense. Feeling is a more comprehensive word; we are said to feel indignation, love, surprise,

* Vol. I. p. 324. † *Vide* p. 326.

as readily as we are said to feel the warmth of a fire, or the coldness of snow;" the latter feelings only, however, are sensations.*

It must be particularly observed, as it is stated in the definition given a short time ago, that sensations are those states of mind which *immediately* succeed certain changes in the bodily organs. It very frequently happens that a long train of rapidly successive feelings is awakened by a single impression upon an organ of sense. It is, however, only to the first in the series, to that which is directly consequent upon the bodily affection, that the term sensation is properly applied.

It is not possible, by any effort, to bring the mind into that state which is produced by any external object upon an organ of sense. The remembrance or the conception of a sensation, is a totally different state of mind from the sensation itself. It is uniformly, in our waking hours at least, of a less powerful and stimulating nature. I say in our waking hours, because, if the consciousness of others resembles my own at least, we sometimes have, during sleep, sensations (if we may so call them) of sight and touch as vivid as any that occur to us while awake. The phænomena of sleep, however, involved, as they must be admitted to be, in so much perplexity, are not to be taken into the account here.

III. The next general observation in reference to sensation is, that we must be careful not to regard the term as restricted, in its application, to those states of mind which are decidedly pleasing or painful in their nature. There is some danger that a young inquirer may do this. A sensation, he is apt to

* P. 399.

imagine, is something that is very distinctly felt; and no sensation can be thus felt which is, in its own nature, indifferent. The term, however, should be regarded as comprehending every mental affection that is the immediate consequent of an impression upon any organ of sense; and it is the opinion of all our most enlightened metaphysicians, (an opinion indeed which is all but self-evident,) that by far the greater number of our sensations are of a kind which cannot be termed either agreeable or disagreeable. There is no object of sense which does not, when it comes in contact with its respective organ, produce a sensation. "I apprehend," says Dr. Reid, "that besides the sensations which are either agreeable or disagreeable, there is still a greater number that are indifferent. To these we give so little attention that they have no name, and are immediately forgot, as if they had never been; and it requires attention to the operations of our minds, to be convinced of their existence. For this end we may observe that to a good ear, every human voice is distinguishable from all others. Some voices are pleasant, some disagreeable; but the far greater part can neither be said to be one or the other. The same thing may be said of other sounds, and no less of tastes, smells, and colours; and if we consider that our senses are in continual exercise while we are awake, that some sensation attends every object they present to us, and that familiar objects seldom raise any emotion pleasurable or painful,—we shall see reason, besides the agreeable and disagreeable, to admit a third class of sensations, that may be called indifferent."*

Of what use then, it may be asked, is this large class

* *Vide* Essay II. chap. xvi. p. 327.

of indifferent sensations? The question, we answer, can only involve difficulty in the case of those who forget that a feeling, or a susceptibility of feeling, may possess the highest value, and prove ultimately the spring of exalted enjoyment, which is not itself attended with delight. "If a man had no ear to receive pleasure from the harmony or melody of sounds, he would still find the sense of hearing of great utility. Though sounds gave him neither pleasure nor pain of themselves, they would give him much useful information." "Think of the innumerable sensations produced by the words and letters of a volume lying open before us. They are indifferent in themselves, yet are they more precious, even in relation to happiness itself, from the intellectual and moral benefit they are the means of imparting, than other sensations of which it is the very essence to be delightful."

IV. Another important general remark in reference to sensation is, that we are utterly ignorant of the nature of that change, in the bodily organ, which has been affirmed to be essential to sensation. The affection of the sentient mind, is the result of the presence of an external object, or rather of a certain state of the organ, which is produced by the presence and influence of the object; for that when rays of light, for instance, come in contact with the optic nerve, they effect some change in its state, before sensation can exist in the mind, there can be no doubt, though what this change is we are unable even to conjecture. Were there any encouragement to make an attempt to ascertain its nature, it would be the province of the anatomist to do it; but there is none. Dr. Reid expressly states that we know nothing of it; and he gives the name of impression to this change in the organ, in preference to several others to which he

refers, on the ground that it better comports with our ignorance. Even this term, however, is not unexceptionable. It conveys, as Dr. Brown justly observes, too much of the notion of a peculiar well-known species of action; that which consists in producing an image of the external object upon the organ,—a notion which has had a most pernicious effect in the theory of perception. All we know upon the subject is, that some change is produced in the state of the organ; and, therefore, "a phrase which expresses the least possible knowledge, must be allowed to be the best suited to human ignorance." Nothing can be safely affirmed, but that sensation is preceded by a variation of organic state.

V. The next important general observation in reference to sensation is, that we know nothing of the nature of the connexion between external objects, or the organs of sense, and the percipient mind. It is in all cases of vast importance to see clearly the limits within which our path is circumscribed. Here our course is bounded by the fact itself. We state the entire amount of our information when we say, that if the bodily organ exist in a particular state (of the nature of which we are ignorant), the mental affection immediately follows. It is true that attempts have been made to trace the progress of the impression, as it is called, upon the organ, from the extremity of the nerve, to the mind, supposed to reside in the brain. But even if there be any such progress, it is manifestly a material or bodily change, whose course we attempt to mark;—the very last of the series of changes, is a material change—an alteration of the central mass of nervous matter called the brain. So that, if the whole of the conceived process were before us, we should be left as much in the dark as ever. The

grand question would remain to be solved, "How does it happen that sensation should be the immediate result of a certain state of the brain?"

The intellectual philosopher might, we conceive, refuse to concern himself about the corporeal part of the process in sensation—if there be such a process—on the ground that it does not belong to his science. It may not, however, be useless to lay the substance of what has been stated upon this subject before the reader.

The brain, we are told—for it seems necessary to give here some account of that organ—is of a half fibrous, but soft and pulpy texture, consisting of many convolutions, adapted perhaps to answer particular purposes in the economy of life, though it is impossible for us to ascertain what those purposes are. From the brain, or the spinal marrow, which is an elongation of the brain, proceed a vast number of fine cords, called nerves, which make their way to all parts of the body, separating into smaller branches as they proceed, until they become invisible to the naked eye. They are, it should be especially observed, of the same substance with the brain itself, "and in perfect continuity with that substance, forming, therefore, with it what may be considered as one mass, as much as the whole brain itself may be considered as one mass." The extremities of these nerves constitute what we call organs of sense, with which the causes of sensation come in contact; and all, in fact, which is certainly known concerning sensation is, that when the organ, the nerve, and the brain are in a sound state, or not materially diseased, a change of state in the organ, produced by some external cause, is followed by that mental feeling to which we give the name of sensation.

With reference to the corporeal process just alluded

to, it is generally thought that this change in the state of the organ, is succeeded by some change in the state of the nerve, and this again by some change in the state of the brain, previous to actual sensation. "There is sufficient reason to conclude," says Dr. Reid, "that the object produces some change in the organ (rather in its state); that the organ produces some change upon the nerve; and that the nerve produces some change upon the brain." To these changes he gives the name of "impression;" and he explicitly says that the organ and the nerve, are to be regarded as media merely, for making the ultimate impression upon the brain, which he regards as the last step in the material part of the process. "Here," says he, "the material part ends; at least, we can trace it no further,—the rest is all intellectual."*

Previous to the time of Dr. Reid, there had been many speculations amongst philosophers, respecting the manner in which this impression is conveyed from the organ to the brain. The celebrated Des Cartes adopted the following hypothesis. A certain fluid, to which he gave the name of animal spirits, (of whose existence even we have no proof,) is secreted, as he supposed, by the brain. This fluid is conveyed through the nerves, which he considered tubular, to the organs of sense; and when an impression is made upon the organ, it is communicated by the animal spirits to the brain, in the pineal gland of which, being, of all the parts of that member, the only one which is single, he imagined the soul takes up its abode. The relicts of this dream of a great mind, yet remain in the phraseology which describes great constitutional vivacity, as an exuberance of animal spirits. The hypo-

* Vol. I. p. 119.

thesis itself has long since sunk into deserved contempt. It is a *mere* hypothesis.

The tubular structure of the nerves was denied by Dr. Briggs, Sir Isaac Newton's master in astronomy. He affirmed them to be solid filaments of prodigious tenuity; and this opinion, as it accords better with observation, seems to have been more generally received since his time. He appears to have supposed them capable of vibration, though their want of tenacity, moisture, &c. render such an opinion highly improbable, and that the impression is transmitted, by vibration of the nerve, from the organ to the brain.

Sir Isaac Newton records it as a conjecture, whether there may not be a subtile fluid, immensely rarer than air, called ether, pervading all bodies; and whether sensation may not be produced by the vibrations of this medium, excited by the external object, and propagated along the nerves.

On this hint, the celebrated Hartley appears to have founded his doctrine concerning the manner in which impressions are conveyed from the organ to the brain; an opinion which, in this country at least, entirely supplanted the notion of Des Cartes. He himself explains it in the following manner. "External objects, impressed on the senses, occasion, first in the nerves, on which they are impressed, and then in the brain, vibrations of the small, and, as one may say, infinitesimal medullary particles. And these vibrations," he adds, "are excited, propagated, and kept up, partly by the ether, partly by the uniformity, continuity, softness, and active powers of the medullary substance of the brain, spinal marrow, and nerves." This hypothesis, as it has been more than once replied, involves *two* gratuitous suppositions—the existence of the ether, and the existence of the vibrations of which it speaks;

for nothing like proof has been given that the words are not symbols of things which have no being. It is unworthy the dignity of philosophy to contend against such mere assumptions.*

Granting, then, that in sensation, some impression is transmitted from the organ to the central brain, we ought still to reject the theories of Des Cartes and Hartley, and to acknowledge, with Dr. Reid, that we are utterly ignorant of its nature. But are we sure that any impression *is* thus transmitted? The reasons for the supposition are thus stated by Dr. Reid: "When the organ of any sense is perfectly sound, and has the impression made upon it by the object ever so strongly; yet, if the nerve that serves that organ be cut, or tied hard, there is no perception; and it is well known, that disorders in the brain deprive us of the power of perception, when both the organ and its nerve are sound."† Dr. Brown, on the other hand, conceives it possible, and indeed probable, that sensation is the immediate consequent of the change produced upon the organ. There is no reason to be assigned, *à priori*, he thinks, and very justly as it appears to us, that a certain state of the organ cannot be the cause of sensation, as well as a certain state of the brain, especially when it is recollected that the brain, nerve, and organ, are of the same substance, and perfectly continuous. The causes to which Dr. Reid refers, as preventing sensation, *may* operate by destroying that sound state of the *organ* which has been rendered necessary to sensation. The nerve, organ, and brain, forming one great organ, "a sound state of the *whole* organ, even from the analogy of other grosser organs, may well be

* *Vide* Reid, Vol. I. p. 122—138. Brown, Vol. II, pp. 424—432.

† P. 119.

supposed to be necessary for the healthy state, and perfect function, of each separate part."*

Whatever be thought of this conjecture of Dr. Brown, it can scarcely be doubted, I think, that, in the words just quoted, he pushes his statements too far, and involves himself in contradiction. If the brain and the nerves be one organ, as he affirms; and if a sound state of the whole organ be necessary for the healthy state and perfect functions of each separate part, as he further affirms; is it not manifest that disease in the nerves, connected with the organ of sight, for instance, would paralyze the nerves connected with all the other senses, yea, the whole brain itself?—in opposition to fact, and to his own admissions, that the blind are still sensible of sound, &c.

Nor does this writer appear to me to have given a satisfactory reply to Dr. Reid's statements on this point. The argument of Dr. Reid is, that when a nerve is bound, or cut, there is no sensation, *because that circumstance prevents the necessary transmission of the impression to the brain.* The argument is invalid, replies Dr. Brown, because the application of the ligature, or the knife, prevents that sound state of the nerve (*i. e.* as he means, the organ) which is necessary to sensation. Now this reply might be regarded as sufficient, if the ligature, &c. destroyed the sound state of the nerve *above* the seat of the injury as well as *below* it. This, however, if I mistake not, is not the case. The sensibility of the nerve *above* the ligature, or the division, remains unimpaired; and as no reason can be assigned why the injury should extend downwards, and not upwards, the natural conclusion seems to be, that there is no sensation

* P. 431.

*below* the seat of the injury, because that injury cuts off the necessary communication with the brain. There are other reasons, also, which a regard to brevity will not allow me to mention, that concur with the above statement in leading me to prefer the old views upon this subject.

But though we should concede to Dr. Reid that the changes of which he speaks are actual steps in the process of sensation, the reader is again requested to bear in mind, that they are merely corporeal changes. The only difference between these writers is, that the one regards sensation as the immediate result of a certain change in the state of the organ, while the other considers it as flowing directly from some change in the state of the central brain. Both sentiments have to encounter the same difficulty—"how a change in what is mere matter, should be followed by a change in a substance so radically different from it, as mind." The hypotheses of Des Cartes, and Hartley, so far from removing this difficulty, do not tend, in the smallest degree, to diminish it. For with reference to that of Hartley, the least fanciful perhaps of the two, it may be observed, that it is as difficult to conceive how vibrations of the particles of the brain should be followed by sensation, as how it should spring directly from an organic change. Under the influence of these considerations, an excellent writer has said, "All attempts to explain the principle on which depends the connexion between the body and the soul have been unsuccessful. We can advance only a few steps in the process, and there the inquiry of the philosopher terminates, as well as the observations of the vulgar and the unreflecting." Had the assertion been, "we cannot advance a single step," it would, indeed, have been more correct; for the

mere tracing of the corporeal changes does nothing towards explaining the connexion between matter and mind. Were it possible, indeed, to trace them with certainty, we should do no more than is effected when we trace the progress of the rays of light, from the object from which they are reflected, to the optic nerve—which leaves the mystery of perception entirely unravelled. There is, accordingly, no late writer on Mental Science who does not admit that all speculations on the point must be entirely fruitless. "Of the nature of the connexion of the great sensorial organ with the sentient mind," says one of the most enlightened, "we shall never be able to understand more than is involved in the simple fact, that a certain affection of the nervous system precedes immediately a certain affection of the mind."

Now there is one circumstance to which the reader's attention is especially directed, viz. *to that feeling of mysteriousness* with which we are apt to think of the connexion which subsists between matter and mind. It carries along with it something *peculiarly* inexplicable in our apprehension. The nature of the union which exists between physical causes, and their effects, is not, we admit, unattended with difficulty; but the mutual influence and operation of matter and mind, present, we are ready to imagine, difficulties which are entirely *sui generis*, and especially incapable of solution.

For this feeling, however, Dr. Brown has succeeded in proving that there exists no cause whatever in the nature of the case. This distinguished writer has shewn that the influence of matter upon mind, or of mind upon matter, is not *more inexplicable* than the influence which matter exerts upon matter, in the innumerable physical changes which we are every

day called to witness. That a certain state of any organ of sense should be directly succeeded by sensation, is wonderful, and *we feel it to be so:* but that the odour of a rose, coming in contact with the olfactory nerve, should be immediately succeeded by that change in the state of the organ, which is necessary to sensation, is equally unintelligible—equally wonderful, and yet *we do not conceive it to be so.* How is this?

Dr. Brown supposes that, in the facts just referred to, we may trace the influence of the false notion, that physical causes and effects are united by some secret link, or vinculum, which link, though it resides *in* the cause, is totally distinct from it, or something superadded to it. Consistently with this notion, it is easy to conceive of matter being joined to matter;—a vinculum may be found, or imagined, to unite them. But what fetters can be forged, capable of holding in bondage two such radically different substances as matter and mind?

The notion, however, to which I have just referred, is now universally abandoned. Mr. Stewart admits "that we are unable to perceive a necessary connexion between two successive events; that this connexion may, in no instance, be a necessary connexion; that, in natural philosophy, when we speak of one thing being the cause of another, all that we mean is, that the two are constantly conjoined, so that when we see the one we may expect the other."

And when philosophers abandoned the notion of a secret link between cause and effect, which, though distinct from both, binds them together, they should have ceased to regard the connexion between matter and mind, as involving in it any thing peculiarly inexplicable: I mean, that they should have ceased to

do this, whatever be the sentiments they held with reference to causation. For, if the amount of what we know with regard to physical causes and effects, be, that one event invariably precedes, and another event invariably follows, we are surely not left more entirely in the dark with respect to the union of matter and mind. Or, if the physical cause and effect be supposed to be united by a direct exertion of divine power, it is manifestly just as competent to that power to join, in invariable sequence, a certain bodily change with a certain mental affection. Or, if it be imagined that there is *aptitude* in the cause to precede, and in the effect to follow—something, that is, in their constitution, of the nature of which, however, we can form no conception, to *adapt* them to stand in that mutual relation;—how can we doubt that it is as easy for the Creator to impart this aptitude to a physical substance, to stand in the relation of immediate antecedent to a certain mental change, as to a certain physical change? One might imagine, from the language of some individuals, that it is not difficult to explain how matter acts upon matter; and we are apt to imagine that we fully comprehend the subject. But we delude ourselves. We know that the effect is linked, in invariable sequence, with the cause; and this is all we do know—all we ever shall or ever can know. *How* it is so, we can form no conception. "*Why* is it so?" admits of no other answer, than that God has ordained it to be so, and given the cause an aptitude to precede, and the effect an aptitude to follow; but of the nature of that aptitude we are profoundly ignorant. That matter should act upon mind, and mind upon matter, is, indeed, wonderful; but not more wonderful than that matter should act upon matter; "since all we know in either case is,

that a certain change of one substance has followed a certain change of another substance, a change which, in all cases exactly similar, is expected by us to follow again."

VI. With reference to sensation, it is especially necessary to observe, that we must carefully guard against supposing that, by the influence of external objects upon the organs of sense, we gain any other knowledge of these objects, than of what they are relatively to our feelings. Persons unaccustomed to reflect upon subjects of this kind, are prone to imagine that we obtain, by sensation, a knowledge of what surrounding bodies are in themselves; in other words, to suppose that there must be something in the objects, which act upon our senses, similar to the sensations they produce—that there is sweetness in the sugar, fragrance in the rose, heat in the fire, and so on. On the same ground, they might have conceived of pain as residing in the knife, or sword, which wounded them; for sweetness, fragrance, heat, and pain, are all equally sensations, which can exist no where but in the mind: "and to suppose that any property of matter can resemble them, is not less absurd than the mistake of the blind man, who conceived that the colour called scarlet resembled the sound of a trumpet." It is not intended, of course, to deny that there are qualities, or, as it has been explained, aptitudes in bodies to produce these feelings; nor that, to the aptitude of sugar, for instance, to cause the sensation of sweetness, we may properly apply the term sweetness; and so of the other qualities. All that it is intended to affirm is, that the quality, or aptitude, and the resulting sensation, are not the same thing; and, indeed, that they are not less unlike than the sharp point of a

needle, and the pain of the puncture produced by it. Yet we are apt to forget this; and, in consequence of a bias contracted in infancy, are ready, as it has been observed, to transport our sensations out of ourselves, and to spread them, as it were, over a substance to which they cannot possibly belong. This is especially the case with regard to colour. How difficult do we find it to divest ourselves of the belief that something analogous to our sensations of colour is inherent in bodies! Whereas it is unquestionable that colour, as a quality *in bodies*, is nothing more than the properties of attraction and repulsion; in consequence of which they transmit some rays, and reflect others, and so appear coloured. And that colour, considered with reference *to the rays themselves*, can be nothing more than an aptitude, of the nature of which we can know nothing, to excite certain sensations in our minds.

All this, with reference to the secondary properties of matter, as they are called, philosophers are now ready to admit. Even Dr. Reid contends, not merely that there is nothing like our feelings of fragrance, &c. in surrounding objects, but that the qualities which produce these feelings are only known as the causes of the sensations; *i.e.* that our knowledge of them is relative, not absolute.*

Besides the secondary qualities of bodies, as sound, taste, colour, smell, heat, and cold, there are, however, as every one knows, certain others, which Mr. Locke denominated primary qualities, such as extension, divisibility, figure, motion, solidity, hardness, softness, and fluidity; and to these qualities the foregoing remarks have been thought not to apply. "Our

* *Vide* also Welsh's Memoirs, pp. 216, 217.

senses," Dr. Reid states, "give us only a relative and obscure notion of the secondary qualities; they merely inform us that they are qualities which produce in us certain sensations; but as to what they are in themselves, our senses leave us in the dark." On the other hand, he affirms, "that of the primary qualities they give us a direct and a distinct notion, and inform us *of what they are in themselves.*" "Every one," he adds, "capable of reflection, may easily satisfy himself that he has a perfectly clear and distinct notion of extension, divisibility, figure, motion." Of fluidity, softness, and hardness, he says, "they are different degrees of cohesion in the parts of a body;" and he adds, "of the cause of this cohesion we are ignorant, but the thing itself we understand perfectly, being immediately informed of it by the sense of touch. It is evident, therefore, that of the primary qualities we have a clear and distinct notion; we know what they are, though we may be ignorant of their causes."*

To the same effect is the language of Mr. Stewart. "The qualities perceived by smelling, tasting, hearing &c. are known to us only as the causes of certain sensations; and have, therefore, been contra-distinguished, by the name of secondary qualities, from those of which we learn the nature directly and immediately from the sensations with which they are connected."†

According, then, to the statements of Dr. Reid, and his illustrious disciple, the remark made a short time ago, viz. that the influence of external objects upon the organs of sense, can give us no other knowledge of those objects than of what they are

* *Vide* Vol. I. p. 332—338. † *Vide* Outlines, pp. 21, 22.

relatively to our feelings, must be understood with limitations. Of the primary qualities of matter, they affirm that we know what they are in themselves, and not merely what they are in relation to us. On these statements, the following remarks are submitted to the reader.

*First,* They appear to oppose Mr. Stewart's own admission, that our knowledge of matter is only relative.* I do not dwell on this, because Mr. Stewart probably meant, with Dr. Reid, that our knowledge does not reach to the essence of matter—that it only extends to what matter is *relatively to its properties.* I would, however, suggest, that it appears to be very anomalous phraseology. We speak of the relations which one body bears to another; we speak also of the relation which one property of matter bears to another property, and one state of mind to another state; but surely it is language unwarranted by general usage, to talk of the relations of a substance to its qualities.

*Secondly,* The direct and distinct notions which, as both these writers affirm, we form of the primary qualities of matter, are mental states, and mental states alone; and can, accordingly, bear no more resemblance to any thing external, than the sensations which result from the secondary qualities of matter. Let it be granted, for the present, that there is a difference in our notions or ideas of the primary and secondary qualities; that the former are more distinct than the latter; still they are only notions. The *qualities* of extension, and hardness, &c. are not to be identified with the *notions* we form of them, any more than the *quality* of fragrance is to be identified with the

* *Vide* Vol. I. p. 3.

*sensation* of fragrance. The qualities, and the notions, it is to be further observed, do not, and cannot, resemble each other. Hardness and extension are the causes of our ideas, or notions; but, as they are properties of matter, they can no more resemble these notions, or ideas, which are states of mind, than the unknown quality of the rose resembles the well-known sensation of fragrance. All our ideas, notions, perceptions, &c. are states of mind, to which nothing external can bear the least resemblance. We know these states directly; we know what they are in themselves. But we know hardness and extension, as qualities of matter, only relatively; *i. e.* we know them only as the antecedents, or *causes*, of these mental states. To say we know what the qualities are in themselves, is to identify the hardness and extension, which are without us, with the *notions* of hardness and extension which are within us. And this, incredible as it may appear, is the mistake into which Dr. Reid has fallen.

*Thirdly*, Let it be considered whether more has not been said with respect to the superior distinctness of our notions of the primary qualities, than the case justifies. Take the primary quality of hardness, and the secondary quality of colour, for instance. "Hardness," says Dr. Reid, "is cohesion in the parts of bodies. Of the cause of this cohesion we are ignorant; but the thing itself we perfectly understand, being immediately informed of it by the sense of touch." Now, might it not be said, "colour, in a body, is its tendency to reflect certain rays of light only, in consequence of which it appears coloured. The cause of this tendency we know not; but the thing itself we perfectly understand, being immediately informed of it by the sense of sight." Nay, might we not

pursue the parallel to the other secondary qualities? Might it not be said, "fragrance in a rose is its tendency to throw off certain particles, which excite an agreeable sensation in us, as the cohesion of the parts of bodies excites the notion of hardness in us? Of the cause of this tendency we are ignorant; but the thing itself we perfectly understand, being immediately informed of it by the sense of smell." "Fragrance is something *unknown*, that, in a certain relation to our olfactory nerves, excites a well-known agreeable sensation; and hardness in the table is, in like manner, *something unknown*, that, in a certain relation to our tactual organs, excites the *notion* of hardness. But the notion of hardness is in us, and not in the table, in the same way that the agreeable feeling is in us, and not in the rose. Mr. Stewart states it as a fact, that we have notions of external qualities which have no resemblance to our sensations, or to any thing of which the mind is conscious. But surely we are conscious of nothing but our own feelings and notions. We are conscious not of the qualities, but of our notions of them; and what these qualities are but the unknown causes of these notions, we cannot, according to the present constitution of our nature, ever know."*

The truth of the preceding statements will become more apparent, after we have examined Dr. Reid's account of the difference which, as he conceives, exists between sensation and perception; and when we have ascertained what it is that really takes place in the mind, when we are said to perceive an external object. Taking this philosopher for our guide, the term Sensation denotes merely that change in the

* Welsh's Memoirs of Dr. Brown, pp. 255-6.

state of the mind, which results from an impression upon any one of the organs of sense. Perception expresses the knowledge which we obtain of the qualities of matter, by means of our sensations. As a mental faculty, or power, it is supposed, further, to be simple and original, like sensation; to be the faculty by which this knowledge is gained; as sensation is the power which renders us susceptible, or rather, which *is* the susceptibility of feeling, when an external object acts upon an organ of sense. "Sensation supposes a sentient being, and a certain manner in which that being is affected; but it supposes no more. Perception implies an immediate conviction and belief of something external, something different both from the mind which perceives, and from the act of perception."* "When I smell a rose, there is, in this operation, both sensation and perception. The agreeable odour I feel, considered by itself, without relation to any external object, is merely a sensation. This sensation can be nothing else than it is felt to be. Its very essence consists in its being felt; and when it is not felt, it is not. There is no difference between the sensation, and the feeling of it; they are one and the same. It is for this reason, we before observed, that in sensation there is no object distinct from the act of the mind by which it is felt; and this holds true with regard to all sensations."† The incorrectness of the phraseology here is manifest, though regard to brevity forbids more to be done than to inquire, "What is meant by *an act of the mind by which* the sensation is felt?"

"Let us next attend," adds Dr. Reid, "to the perception we have in smelling a rose. Perception has

* Vol. I. p. 329. † Vol. I. p. 321.

always an external object; and the object of my perception, in this case, is that quality in the rose which I discern by the sense of smell. Observing that the agreeable sensation is raised when the rose is near, and ceases when it is removed, I am led, by my nature, to conclude some quality to be in the rose, which is the cause of this sensation. This quality in the rose is the object perceived; and that *act of my mind by which I have the conviction and belief of this quality*, (what can be the meaning of these words?) is what, in this case, I call Perception.*

My *first* remark on this statement is in reference to some of the minor inaccuracies which it exhibits.

"Sensation," says Dr. Reid, "is nothing else than it is felt to be." Now, when we recollect that these words occur in a passage in which sensation and perception are contra-distinguished from one another, it will be seen that they necessarily imply that perception *is* something more than it is felt to be. Yet, as no affection of the mind can be any thing more than it is felt to be, it is impossible to maintain the truth of this implied assertion, without identifying perception with the thing perceived.

"The very essence of sensation consists in its being felt; and when it is not felt, it is not." Can perception then exist, which the language implies, when we are not conscious of it? A sensation has no more right to appropriate to itself the name of a feeling, than a perception as it is called; both of them are feelings, or affections, or states of mind; and if the one cannot exist without a consciousness that such is the case, so neither can the other.

"In sensation there is no object distinct from the

* Vol. I. pp. 321-2.

act of the mind by which it is felt." Now, if a sensation and the feeling of it are the same, as we are assured, what need is there for an *act* of mind to feel it? And what can that act of mind be *by* which a sensation is felt? And, further, what can Dr. Reid mean by representing this *act* of the mind as the *object* of sensation, at a time, too, when he meant to say that sensation has *no* object, and is thus distinguished from perception? Yet his words clearly imply this. "In sensation there is no object *distinct* from the act of the mind by which it is felt." Our obligations to Dr. Reid, as a writer on mental science, are very great; yet it is not to be denied that his language is sometimes deficient in point of precision. What the reader is now, however, particularly requested to observe, is the statement of Dr. R. that perception has an *object*, while sensation, as he alleges, has none. There is a sense in which this assertion is true, as it will be afterwards seen; but it is not true in the sense which he attaches to the words. By the declaration that perception has an object, he probably intended that when we perceive, we perceive *something*. But, may it not be replied, that when we feel, we also feel *something?* in other words, are sensible that there is some cause of our sensation? Whether the mere circumstance that the cause was known in one case and not in the other, if such were the fact, would warrant us in considering the two feelings, as the result of two radically different powers of mind, will be seen afterwards.

*Secondly*, the statement which Dr. Reid has here given of perception, appears to be at direct variance with what he says, in his Inquiry, concerning the information which the mind obtains through the medium of the external senses. He here talks of

discerning qualities by the senses. He tells us that "the external senses have a double province;—to make us feel, and to make us perceive. They furnish us with a variety of sensations, some pleasant, others painful, and others indifferent; at the same time, they give us a conception, and an invincible belief, of the existence of external objects."* Now in the work to which I have just referred, he tells us, in direct opposition to this statement, that the senses of smell, taste, hearing, and sight, give us no knowledge even of the existence of external bodies,—that we might experience all the sensations which these senses can transmit to the mind, and yet have no conception, and no belief, that there is any thing without the mind. How then can he maintain, as he does, that it is the business of these senses to make us perceive, as well as feel? And, even with regard to the remaining sense of touch, he shews, at great length, that there is nothing in the peculiar sensations of which it is the inlet, from whence the existence of any thing external can be inferred; *i. e.* in other words, that the sense of touch does not, any more than the other senses, teach us to perceive. His object, doubtless, is to shew that the sensations of touch, by an original law of our nature, suggest the notion of something external. But granting the correctness of this statement, it is manifest that the notion itself—or the conception of something without us—is not properly *by means* of the sensations of touch, though it accompanies them; but *by means* of that particular form of intuition, that law of our nature, of which Dr. Reid speaks, and which is roused into operation when the sensations of touch are expe-

* Pp. 349, 50. *Vide* also Stewart's Elements, Vol. I. 8vo edit. pp. 92 and 100.

rienced. Now, no such law of our nature is called into action when the sensations of smell, taste, sight, &c. are produced; so that if we were constrained to admit his doctrine with reference to the sense of touch,—and to say it is the office of *that sense* to make us feel, and to make us perceive,—there would be no pretence whatever for extending the same doctrine to the other senses.

*Thirdly*, I observe that, taking Dr. Reid's account of the matter, it is obvious that the conclusion to which he comes, in the case supposed, does not require, for arriving at it, any distinct and original faculty. "Observing that the agreeable sensation is raised when the rose is near, and ceases when it is removed, I am led, by my nature, to conclude some quality to be in the rose, which is the cause of this sensation. This quality is the object perceived; and that act of the mind, by which I have the conviction and belief of this quality, is what, in this case, I call perception." Now, in remarking upon this statement, it would be perfectly fair to say, that if the sensations of touch had not been previously experienced, and so the knowledge of things external already obtained, the Doctor, so far from being led by his nature to conclude some quality in the rose, which is the cause of the sensation, could gain by what he felt, according to his own statements, no notion of the *existence* of the rose. Not to insist upon this, however, I would ask whether the conclusion of which he speaks, is not a mere act of judgment, or memory, founded on an intuitive belief. A sensation of fragrance is experienced; we believe intuitively that it must have a cause; experience teaches us to class it with that order of feelings which are originated by external objects, of which we have learned the existence; we judge, accordingly, in the

circumstances described by Dr. Reid, that the rose is the cause of it. What necessity is there for supposing that the belief, in this case, is the result of an original power of mind, to which a peculiar name should be given? A farmer beholds the mangled remains of a flock of sheep,—he sees the wolf, in the distance, making his escape,—he *judges* that the wolf has been the destroyer. Dr. Reid would not say he *perceives* it; and yet the conclusion is the result of the exercise of the same mental power, which pronounced upon the cause of the sensation. Dr. Reid does not venture to say *here* that he perceives the quality. He is only led to *conclude some quality to be in the rose* which is the cause of the sensation; *i. e.* he concludes that the rose is its cause, and is somehow adapted to be so. And when we judge the wolf to be the destroyer, do we not conclude that he is adapted to be so? And should we not draw the same conclusion, if the animal, making his escape with the marks of slaughter upon him, were one with whose nature and existence we had been previously unacquainted?

The foregoing remarks prepare the way for the following statement, viz. that what we call Perception, *is the reference we make of our sensations to something external as the cause of them.* In the case supposed by Dr. Reid, we refer the agreeable feeling to the rose, as its cause. The reference is different from the feeling itself—it is different from the object, or the rose; but it results not from a particular faculty of the mind given to it for that express purpose, but from the general principle, whatever that principle may be, by which we are enabled to draw conclusions in other cases. When Dr. Reid says, as he appears to do in other parts of his works, that we perceive the quality itself, if he intends more than that we conclude there

is a quality in the rose adapted to excite the sensation, his statement is at variance with all he has said with regard to secondary qualities; viz. that our notions of them are only relative—that they are conceived of only as the unknown causes of well-known feelings—that, correctly speaking, we have no conception of *them*, because "a relative notion of a thing is no notion of the thing at all, but only of some relation which it bears to something else."*

But do we not perceive *the rose*, it will be asked, though it should be conceded that we cannot be said to perceive the quality? The answer is, that we do not wish to abandon the phraseology, but to determine its meaning—to ascertain, in short, what it is that takes place in the mind when the rose is said to be perceived. This flower, then, when present, let it be observed, produces sensations of smell, and of sight. Now these sensations are not *adapted* to excite the notion, and, therefore, do not *originally* excite the notion, of any thing external; *i.e.* they give us no perceptions. It is admitted, on all hands, that originally there was nothing in the mind, when a rose was present, but the sensations. Now, however, there certainly is something more than the sensations; and the question is, "What is it?" To that question I answer, "It is the reference which the mind makes of the sensations to something external, at a certain distance from us, of a certain form, texture, &c., as their cause;—a reference which experience, when we have gained the knowledge of things external in the manner to be afterwards described, enables us to make. It is to be observed, however, that this reference neither involves, nor is accompanied with, any

* Vol. I. p. 334.

knowledge of the rose, but as the unknown cause of these sensations of smell and sight. Perception of the rose is then this reference, or the belief that these visual, and nasal feelings, are produced by a certain external body, to which we give the name of rose.

I am aware that individuals, unaccustomed to such speculations, will yet inquire, "But do not we see the rose?" I answer, that this perception of the rose, of which they imagine themselves the subjects, is either the particular sensation of sight which the rose produces; or the reference of this sensation to something external as its cause, which is known to be present by the existence of the sensation, and which is *only known as the cause of the sensation.*

The child, it is admitted, before he has gained more knowledge than can be derived from the sense of sight, *does not see the rose* in the sense which we now attach to the words. Were it not for the sense of touch, it is further admitted, *we should never see the rose* in our present sense of the terms. The result of the presence of a rose would be a mere sensation, the cause of which would never be imagined to be any thing external. Such is not the perception of a rose now; because the sense of touch, or muscular sensation, has given us the knowledge of something without us; and experience has taught us that when certain sensations exist, certain external bodies are present to the organs, and, therefore, we refer the sensations to these bodies as their causes.

With the sensations of touch, however, or with the muscular sensations, which for the present I do not distinguish from each other, I admit that there is connected an intuitive belief in the existence of things external. It will, accordingly, be perhaps contended,

that we have here perception in the sense which Dr. Reid attached to the term. Let us examine this subject a little more fully.

An external body is brought, we shall suppose, for the first time, into contact with the organ of touch. It produces its appropriate sensation. That sensation suggests the notion of something out of the mind. It is not only believed to have a cause, but it is referred intuitively to something *external* as its cause. What can perception, in this case, be more than this intuitive reference?

It will be replied, perhaps, that, along with this intuitive reference, there arises, by a law of the mind, the notion of extension, figure, hardness, &c.;—that this notion is the *perception* of these qualities, and presupposes an original power of mind, to which the same name (perception) is given, by which it is rendered capable of forming the notion. Now if it be granted that such notions do arise, (though it may be doubted whether our conceptions of hardness, roundness, &c. &c. include any thing more than a notion, in each case, that there is something external which produces the sensations we experience when we touch a hard and a round body; so that our conceptions of the primary qualities may not be essentially different from the notions we have of the secondary qualities of matter,) it is maintained, that they arise in the same way with our belief that the whole is greater than its part—or that the order of nature will remain the same; and that we might with as much propriety ascribe our belief, in the cases just mentioned, to the power of perception, as our notions of extension, figure, &c. It may be further observed, also, that if the term Perception be regarded as denoting these notions, there can be no perception by the other senses; for,

according to Dr. Reid and Mr. Stewart's own account of the matter, we have no notion, in this sense, of the secondary qualities; we only know them as causes of peculiar sensations; *i. e.* we have no notion of *them*, but of their *relations*." Let it be also recollected, in addition to what has been said, that, whatever be the nature of our notions of hardness, extension, form, &c., they are not the qualities themselves—that there can be nothing in the mind but conceptions or notions of the qualities—that the qualities cannot, in the nature of things, bear any resemblance whatever to the notions, &c.; from all which it follows, that the primary qualities are only known as the antecedents or causes of certain sensations and notions; *i. e.* they are not known absolutely, but relatively only.

In thus stating the opinion, however, that perception is not a simple and original power of the mind—that the word denotes merely the reference we make of our sensations to something external as their cause, I agree with Dr. Brown, to whom we are indebted for the most enlightened views upon this subject, in thinking, that it is not desirable to erase the word from our metaphysical vocabulary. "On the contrary," he adds, "I conceive it to be a very convenient one, if the meaning attached to it be sufficiently explained, by an analysis of the complex state of mind which it denotes; and the use of it confined rigidly to cases in which it has this meaning. Sensation may exist without any reference to an external cause, in the same manner as we may look at a book without thinking of the author;—or it may exist with reference to an external cause; and it is convenient, then, to confine the term sensation to the former of these cases, and perception to the latter.*" There is,

* *Vide* Vol. II. p. 47.

accordingly, no object in sensation, in this sense of the word; *i. e.* no reference is made to the cause of the feeling. In Perception there is an object; *i. e.* in perception such a reference is made; and by this, and this alone, it is distinguished from sensation.

Before proceeding to the last general remark concerning sensation, it may be proper to give an account of some of the difficulties in which the more ancient writers on the subject of perception were involved—difficulties with which they could not have been perplexed, had they entertained juster and simpler views of its nature. It is not easy, indeed, to state what were the precise ideas they entertained in reference to perception; the probability is, that there was nothing very definite in their conceptions. The language they employ is analogical, and grossly material. One thing, however, is tolerably certain, viz. that they imagined that, in perception, matter acts in some way upon mind, or mind upon matter, or that there is a mutual and reciprocal operation of matter and mind. Out of this opinion arose, as it appears to me, the absurd doctrine of perception by images. Of this doctrine, I shall *first* give a brief account; *secondly*, exhibit its connexion with the assumed axiom on which it was made to rest; and, *thirdly*, present the reader with a few of those remarks upon it, which the present advanced state of the science of mental philosophy enables us to make.

The doctrine itself may be stated in a very few words. The objects by which we are surrounded, are continually throwing off certain shadowy films, or resemblances of themselves, called anciently species, forms, phantasms, &c., and, in more modern times, ideas, or, by Mr. Hume, impressions. These species, or phantasms, coming in contact with the organs of

sense, are by them transmitted to the brain, on which, as it seems to have been imagined, they impress an image of themselves, or of external objects. I have said, it seems to have been imagined, because it is in some measure doubtful whether they conceived the image to be impressed upon the mind, or the brain, or upon both. It is certain, however, that these species, or the impressions made by them, were regarded by ancient writers as the immediate, *i. e.* real objects in perception; and that, when they talked of perceiving external objects, they intended their language to be understood metaphorically, as we may be said to perceive an absent friend when we look on his picture. "Plato," says Dr. Reid, "illustrates our manner of perceiving the objects of sense in this manner. He supposes a dark subterraneous cave, in which men lie bound in such a manner, that they can direct their eyes only to one part of the cave. Far behind them is a light, some rays of which come over a wall to that part of the cave which is before the eyes of our prisoners. A number of persons, variously employed, pass between them and the light, whose shadows are seen by the prisoners, but not the prisoners themselves."

This statement abundantly confirms the assertion made a short time ago, that the language of the ancient philosophers on this subject is analogical, and grossly material. It is impossible to reflect upon it without feeling that they must have conceived of the mind as possessing eyes like the body; and, further, that the mind perceives an object by looking at it. And there is strong ground to think that some modern philosophers, of great name, opposed, as they imagine themselves to be, to the old Peripatetics, have not entirely delivered themselves from the influence of this false analogy.

The connexion of this view of perception with the assumed axiom, that nothing can act where it is not, is manifest. The invention of these phantasms was a contrivance to destroy, not so much the distance between the senses and the object, which Dr. Brown alleges, as the distance between the object and the percipient mind; that there might be that mutual action of matter and mind which they deemed essential to perception. The following statements will show this. "I suppose," says Malebranche, "that every one will grant, that we perceive not the objects that are without us immediately and of themselves. We see the sun, the stars, and an infinity of objects without us; and it is not at all likely that the soul sallies out of the body, and, as it were, takes a walk through the heavens, to contemplate all those objects. She sees them not, therefore, by themselves; and the immediate object of the mind, when it sees the sun, for example, is not the sun, but something which is intimately united to the soul; and it is that which I call an idea. So that, by the word idea, I understand nothing else here but that which is the immediate object, or nearest to the mind, when we perceive any object. It ought to be carefully observed, that, in order to the mind's perceiving any object, it is absolutely necessary that the idea of that object be actually present to it. Of this it is not possible to doubt. The things which the soul perceives are of two kinds. They are either in the soul, or without the soul. Those that are in the soul are its own thoughts; that is to say, all its different modifications. The soul has no need of ideas for perceiving them. But with regard to things without the mind, we cannot perceive them but by means of ideas."

"How body acts upon mind, or mind upon body,"

says Dr. Porterfield, "I know not; but this I am very certain of, that nothing can act, or be acted upon, where it is not; and, therefore, our mind can never perceive any thing but its own proper modifications, and the various states of the sensorium to which it is present. So that it is not the external sun and moon which are in the heavens, which our mind perceives; but only their images or representations impressed upon the sensorium. How the soul of a seeing man sees these images, or how it receives those ideas from such agitations in the sensorium, I know not; but I am sure it can never perceive the external bodies themselves, to which it is not present."*

These extracts sufficiently explain the notions concerning perception, which were formerly entertained by philosophers, and the reasons which led to their adoption. "Whatever difficulties the hypothesis of species involved," says Dr. Brown, "it at least seemed to remove the supposed difficulty of perception at a distance, and by the half spiritual tenuity of the sensible images, seemed also to afford a sort of intermediate link for the connexion of matter with mind."†

This theory of perception by images, together with all its connected absurdities, it ought to be observed, had partly given place to more rational conceptions before the time of Dr. Reid, whose writings demolished the crazy fabric altogether. Dr. Brown indeed affirms, that, from the time of the decay of the Peripatetic philosophy, the opinions of the very men whom Dr. Reid considered himself opposing, were precisely the same with his own; that he has been misled, by understanding in a literal sense what they understood

* *Vide* Reid's Essays, Vol. I. pp. 289, 290.

† *Vide* Vol. II. p. 107.

in a figurative sense, and so has maintained a sort of "windmill contest" with metaphors only; and, beyond all question, he does produce passages from the writings of Des Cartes, Locke, and others, which seem to bear him out in his assertions. It is necessary, however, to put one statement in the balance against another; and any one who does this carefully, will be disposed, I apprehend, to think that sufficient justice has scarcely been done to Dr. Reid; that more darkness hung over the minds of men, on this subject, than Dr. Brown is disposed to allow. Mr. Welsh conceives it quite indisputable, "that the language of Locke is merely metaphorical;" the statements, however, of the former, seem only to prove that they were occasionally so; and the following extract from Dr. Price's Review proves, beyond all question, that the old theory of images had by no means entirely disappeared. "External objects themselves not being present, if perceived, they must be perceived by *ideas* of them. Nor will it follow from hence, that we can have no assurance of the existence of external objects. All ideas imply the *possibility* of the existence of correspondent objects; and our belief of the *actual* existence of the objects of sense, we may resolve (as Dr. Reid does) into impressions on our senses, forcing belief at the moment of the impression in a manner we cannot explain. And this may be done to more advantage on the supposition of ideas, than without it. For scepticism seems to be less favoured by supposing, that in perception by our senses there is *something* distinct from the mind, and independent of it, really perceived, than by supposing that there is nothing then perceived."*

* *Vide* Price, Note C. pp. 481, 482.

Upon the whole doctrine of perception by images, the following remarks are submitted:—

*First*, that, in relation to many objects of perception, it implies a manifest absurdity. "If vision," says Dr. Brown, "had been our only sense, we might, perhaps, have understood, at least, what was meant by the species, that directly produce our visual images. But what is the phantasm of a sound or an odour?" We perceive, according to this doctrine, by means of all the senses; and yet by none of the senses is it possible to perceive, but by the sense of sight.

*Secondly*, that, in relation to visual objects, it is a mere hypothesis. *What proof have we that an image of such objects even as will admit of an image, is formed in the brain?* "The brain," says Dr. Reid, "has been dissected, times innumerable, by the nicest anatomists—every part of it examined by the naked eye, and with the help of microscopes; but no vestige of an image of any external object was ever found. The brain seems to be the most improper subject that can well be imagined for receiving or retaining images, being a soft, moist, medullary substance."*

And further, it may be asked, *What proof have we even of the existence of the species themselves, by which the images in the brain are supposed to be formed?* Has any man ever seen them? Has any one ever been conscious of them? This is not pretended. The only thing like argument in the support of their existence is derived from the assumption, that nothing can act where it is not; and that this assumption is a false one will, it is hoped, speedily appear. The whole doctrine of perception by images is, therefore, nothing but a fiction, or an hypothesis;

* Vol. I. p. 149.

and men, says Dr. Reid, "then only begin to have a true taste in philosophy, when they have learned to hold hypotheses in just contempt, and to consider them as the reveries of speculative men, which will never have any similitude to the works of God."

*Thirdly*, that, as an hypothesis, it is useless in relation to the great purpose for which it was invented. It leaves any supposed difficulty on the subject of perception just where it found it. For, supposing the monstrous absurdity, that there are images of sounds, smells, &c. as well as of colour and form, could be disposed of; and that we were to allow that, by some mysterious process (a process which, on their own principles, must be as mysterious as perception itself), they make their way to the brain, and impress the likeness of themselves upon that member; what real progress should we have made in explaining the phænomena of perception? It was to destroy the distance between the object of perception and the mind, that the expedient of species, or images, was resorted to. But if the brain, on which the image is supposed to be formed, and the mind, are not in contact with each other, it is manifest that the distance is not destroyed after all. The image is not where the mind is; and, therefore, Malebranche and others have still the main difficulty to solve, how the image in the brain acts upon the mind (or the mind upon the image, for it is difficult to say which was regarded as the agent in perception) where it is not. We cannot wonder that Dr. Porterfield should say, "How the soul of a seeing man sees these images I know not;" for, if it be true that nothing can act where it is not,—and if it be further true, that in perception there is an action of matter upon mind, or of mind upon matter,—it is obviously

as impossible for the soul of a seeing man to see an image of the sun in the brain, as to perceive the sun itself, at the distance of nearly a hundred millions of miles.

Should it be said, with a view to obviate this difficulty, that the soul resides in the brain, so that the image of an external object in the brain *is present to the soul;* I would ask what is meant by this language. We know what we are to understand by the assertion, that one portion of matter is present to another; the phrase imports that the two are, according to ordinary conception, in contact; but how can these ideas be applied to such opposite existences as the soul and the body? How can a material substance be present to, or in contact with, an immaterial one? Besides, if any notion could be formed of the contact of mind and matter, how would this diminish the supposed difficulty of perception? "Two things may be in contact without feeling or perception." "This power of perceiving ideas," says Dr. Reid, "is as inexplicable as any of the powers explained by it. And the contiguity of the object contributes nothing at all to make it better understood; because there appears no connexion between contiguity and perception, but what is grounded on prejudices drawn from some imagined similitude between mind and body."*

The only way of apparent escape from the pressure of this difficulty, is to contend that these phantasms, or species, produce directly upon the mind, and not upon the brain, images of themselves. But to do this is to plunge still deeper into the regions of mystery and nonsense. For how can an image of

* Vol. I. pp. 305-6.

that which has parts exist in an indivisible essence like the mind? Surely the notion of an image, in the mind, must have appeared to the Peripatetics themselves as great an absurdity, as that any thing should act where it is not, had their attention been fairly directed towards it.

*Fourthly*, that the assertion just referred to, viz. "nothing can act where it is not," so far from deserving to be regarded as an axiom, is a mere assumption, for which there is no proof whatever. It has been too long the custom of philosophers to regard it as a self-evident proposition. Dr. Reid himself declares his conviction that its truth must be admitted; and, for a reason which does not appear to possess much weight, even on his own notions of power. "That nothing," says he, "can act where it is not, must I think be admitted; for I agree with Sir Isaac Newton, that power without substance is inconceivable."* But power residing in a substance, though it should operate beyond the boundaries of that substance, is not, it is obvious to reply, power without substance.

Conceding, however, what he does to the old philosophers, Dr. Reid is constrained to deny that in perception there is any action of matter upon mind, or of mind upon matter,—a denial on which some very powerful animadversions are made by a writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, though they do not appear to be grounded on the most enlightened principles; for the action of one body upon another, can mean no more than that it is the immediate antecedent of some change in that other body; and that there is, in this sense, a mutual action of matter and mind, is undoubted. A certain change, for instance, in the

* Vol. I. p. 290.

external organ, or the central brain, is immediately followed by a change in the state of the mind; *i. e.* in the only intelligible sense of the words, matter acts upon mind. Again, a certain volition of the mind, is instantly followed by an action of some part of the muscular frame; *i. e.* mind acts upon matter.

Dr. Reid, however, is driven to the necessity of denying either that the mind, in perception, acts upon the object, or the object upon the mind, as the only way of escape from all the absurdities of the ideal philosophy. He is driven to it, as we have seen, by his unnecessary admission of the truth of the pretended axiom to which we now refer. And I call it an unnecessary admission, since it is as impossible to conceive how two bodies, in a state of junction, act upon each other, (whatever sense we attach to the term action—even if we use it in Dr. Reid's sense, which seems to include something more than immediate antecedence), as to explain the fact when they are in a state of separation; and, therefore, we have no more right to pronounce the latter to be impossible than the former. In fact, all the evidence of experience goes to prove that, in order to action, it is not necessary that two bodies be in a state of junction or contact. The sun attracts the earth—the earth the sun; the moon raises the tides, and alters the relative position of every atom upon the face of our globe; and yet the sun is not where the earth is—the earth is not where the moon is. In fact there is not, as we have good reason to think, one single atom of matter in the whole universe in contact with another atom; and yet the principle of attraction pervades all, *i. e.* matter acts where it is not.

There is no possible way, then, of supporting the credit of this pretended axiom, but to deny that any portion of matter can be properly said to act upon

another,—to maintain that all the motions and changes in the material world are, in fact, effected by spirit, not body,—that God, in other words, is the only agent in the physical universe. Nor is it certain that even this will answer the purpose; for it is as difficult, as we have seen, to say the least of it, to conceive how spirit can be present with matter, as how one particle of matter can be present to another. That the great Being who formed the universe is so far present every where, as that his knowledge and power pervade all times, and all places, is a truth of which we can form a tolerably clear conception; but to talk of his being present in the sense of the metaphysicians, when they say that matter can neither act, nor be acted upon, where it is not, is to get far beyond our depth, and to utter words which, while they reach the ear, convey no idea to the understanding.

The preceding reasoning is valid, whatever sense we attach to the term action; but if, when we employ the phrase "one body acts upon another," the meaning is merely that it produces a change in the state of that other body, I can see, for my part I acknowledge, no plausible reason for supposing that the junction of the two bodies is necessary for the production of such an effect. It is just as easy to Divine power so to constitute the sun and the earth, as that a change should take place in the latter, when brought into a certain relative position with reference to the former, though at the distance from it of 95,000,000 of miles, as if the two were in actual contact. Our feelings are apt to deceive us on this subject, in consequence of the circumstance that most of the changes which we witness are produced among bodies in seeming contact with each other. We should remember, however, that this contact is only a *seeming* contact, (in fact, if

it were real, the change would be equally unaccountable); and that there are cases of influence in which even apparent contact does not exist,—such, for instance, as the mutual attraction of the earth, and the heavenly bodies;—a fact which nonplusses the followers of the old philosophy, (the supposition of any thing intervening between the earth and moon does not destroy the difficulty, for still there is no contact), and fairly compels them to acknowledge their ignorance, or draws from them a more than ordinary portion of nonsense and absurdity. The time is not far distant, let us hope, when this nostrum of the dark ages will descend to the grave of all the Capulets, whither it should have gone long ago.

*Fifthly*, that the whole doctrine of perception by images is built on a radically mistaken conception of the nature of perception, giving existence to difficulties, as we have seen, which could not have been fancied even to exist, with more correct views of its nature. For if perception be neither more nor less than the reference, either instinctive or otherwise, which we make of our sensations to something external, as the causes to which they owe their existence, it is manifestly attended with no more difficulty to refer them to something distant, than to something near. When the finger approaches a candle, and we feel its heat, we refer the sensation of warmth to the candle. In like manner, when basking in the heat of the sun, we refer the sensation we feel to the solar rays as its cause. There is as much difficulty in the one case as in the other, and no more; *i. e.* there is, in neither case, no difficulty at all.

VII. The *Seventh* and last general observation with reference to sensation is, that it is that power which connects us with the external world; and that to it

may be ultimately traced all the knowledge of which we are possessed.

"The philosophers," says Mr. Stewart, "who endeavoured to explain the operations of the human mind by the theory of ideas, and who took for granted, that in every exertion of thought there exists in the mind some object distinct from the thinking substance, were naturally led to inquire whence these ideas derive their origin; in particular, whether they are conveyed to the mind from without, by means of the senses, or form part of its original furniture."*

While ideas continued to be regarded as little images in the mind, distinct both from the mind and the object, it is not wonderful that, with regard to *many* of them at least, the latter opinion was generally held. It must have been so difficult to shew in what manner a very considerable number could have entered by the senses, or been produced by reflection, that it was at any rate the easiest mode to say, with Des Cartes, that they are innate.

Mr. Locke raised his voice against the doctrine of innate ideas, maintaining that all may be traced to sensation, or reflection. He insists that the mind has no original furniture of this description,—that all our ideas of external objects enter by means of the senses; and that the rest are obtained from what he calls the *perception* of the operations of our own minds, employed about the ideas it has got. These ideas, thus acquired, "the understanding," he says, "has the power to compare, unite, &c. so as to make at pleasure new complex ideas; but it has not the power to invent or frame one new simple idea in the mind, not taken in by the way before mentioned."†

* Vol. I. p. 94. † *Vide* Book II. Chap. i. ii.

These notions of Locke, after prevailing for a time, were assailed by Leibnitz and Shaftesbury, who insist that many things are innate to the mind, particularly the intellectual powers themselves, and the simple ideas which are necessarily unfolded by their exercise. On this statement, it has been well observed, that "a part of it is doubtless true, though the truth is so obvious that it may perhaps be safely affirmed that Mr. Locke never dreamed of denying it. That our faculties, as conception, memory, and the like, are not ideas acquired by sensation or reflection, is just as plain as that the powers of perceiving and reflecting are not so acquired. It is mere trifling to say that Mr. Locke has not marked the distinction. He was not bound to mark it. It is involved of necessity in the statement of his theory. For the rest, by what sort of logic is it that ideas, unfolded by the exercise of the faculties, can be shewn to be innate?"

The views of Mr. Stewart differ materially from those of Locke. He supposes that sensation and consciousness, or reflection, furnish what he calls the *occasions* on which the mind is first led to form those simple notions into which our thoughts may be analyzed, and which may be considered as the principles or elements of human knowledge—that the sensations, received by means of the external senses, furnish the occasions, for instance, on which the intellectual faculty forms the notion of sounds, smells, flavours, colours, &c.; since the notions are confined to those who are possessed of these senses—that the exercise of the mental faculties furnishes the occasions, in like manner, on which the ideas of reflection (according to Locke's classification)—such, for example, as those of time, motion, personal identy, &c. are formed; to the existence of which notions, or ideas, the exercise

of the respective faculty is indispensable—and that since sensation originates this exercise of the mental faculties, all our ideas may, in the sense explained above, be referred to it. In answering the question, whether all our knowledge may be ultimately traced from our sensations, he replies in the affirmative; but says it implies nothing more "than that the impressions made upon our senses, by external objects, furnish the occasions on which the mind, by the laws of its constitution, is led to perceive the qualities of the external world, and to exert all its intellectual faculties." "Agreeably to this explanation of the doctrine," he adds, "it may undoubtedly be said with plausibility (and I am inclined to believe with truth) that the occasions on which all our notions are formed, are furnished either immediately, or ultimately, by sense." The amount of Mr. Stewart's statements seems to be, that the exercise of the mental faculties, as, for instance, memory, abstraction, reason, &c., furnishes the occasions on which certain simple notions arise in the mind; and that impressions made on our organs of sense, or rather that actual sensations, are the occasions of this exercise of the faculties, so that, in this way, all our knowledge may be traced from our sensations.*

There appears to be a mixture of truth and error, in the statements both of Mr. Locke and Mr. Stewart. That no ideas, either in the ancient or modern sense of the term, can be properly said to be innate, is now generally conceded to Mr. Locke. That some impression from without, *i. e.* upon an organ of sense, is necessary to awaken the mind to the first exercise of consciousness, or rather (for the language of

* *Vide* Elements, Vol. I. Chap. 1. Sec. 4. Phil. Essays, p. 80–92.

Mr. Stewart conveys no distinct idea) that sensations, as the term was formerly explained, are necessarily the first feelings which the mind experiences, and without which it would be impossible for it to become the subject of any other, or even, as Mr. S. says, to arrive at the knowledge of its own existence, must be allowed to Mr. Stewart. This is indeed denied by a late writer, who seems disposed to substitute the theory of innate sensations, in place of the innate ideas of Des Cartes. "We firmly believe," says this writer, "that its most important feelings (*i. e.* the minds,) are independent of the senses; we mean the feelings of pleasure and pain, which are coeval with our existence as sentient beings, and may be, and we doubt not must be perceived, before the senses are called into exercise." This statement most manifestly confounds *feelings* with *susceptibilities* of feeling; the latter of which are doubtless coeval with our existence, but not the former. Having committed this almost incredible mistake, our author proceeds, "all that the senses can do, so far as the mere animal is concerned, is to supply those pleasures which the mind desires," (the pleasures are not then *in* the mind, but are to be brought in by the senses;) "and we have elsewhere supposed," he adds, "and we think it incontrovertible, that the mind may continue *susceptible* of pleasure, or of pain, in the absence of all the external senses." This is readily granted; but how does it prove that the mind may be in a *state* of pleasure or of pain, before any impression is made upon any of the senses, and even in the absence of the senses? "Take away," the same writer proceeds, "sight, hearing, taste, and smell; will a man then be incapable of feeling pleasure and pain? No. Take away the remaining sense of touch; is he then an insentient mass? No. Supply

his wants, and he will still be happy." Now it is readily admitted, that the destruction of the senses, or even of the whole body, does not necessarily involve the destruction of the mind—that all its *susceptibilities* of feeling might remain, and would be again developed, in similar circumstances;—it is further admitted, that the mind, in the case supposed, might be the actual subject of states of feeling, which are in a high degree pleasurable or painful; though not of such as at present directly result from the influence of external objects upon the corporeal organs. All this, I say, is admitted. But the unparalleled absurdity of the statement is, that a man may have animal wants after he has lost all his senses—wants capable of being supplied; for his language is, "Supply his wants, and he will be happy, so far," he adds, "as his *animal existence* is concerned!"* Will this facetious writer be so obliging as to inform us, in the next edition of that useful work in which this extraordinary language is to be found, of what kind of animal wants a man can be the subject, and what kind of animal existence he can possess, when he is deaf, and dumb, and blind—has neither touch, nor taste, nor smell?

It must, also, be further granted to Mr. Stewart, that, though sensations are necessarily the first feelings of the mind, and essential to all others, all our knowledge is not directly derived from sensation; or, to speak more accurately, that our knowledge does not consist merely in the knowledge of our sensations. There are, doubtless, notions, or ideas, which arise in the mind, by the laws of its constitution, on the occurrence of various sensations, and perhaps also, as Mr. Stewart says, on the exercise of its faculties,

* *Vide* Edin. Encyc.—article *Metaphysics*, p. 90.

which bear no resemblance to the sensations, which are their necessary precursors. The first sensation, according to Mr. Stewart, and the second, existing contemporaneously with the remembrance of the first, according to Dr. Brown, *gives us the notion of self.* The occurrence of a certain event, originates the assurance that, in all future time, a similar result will be witnessed in the same circumstances; i. e. *it gives us the notion of a cause.* All this is freely conceded to Mr. Stewart; but it is apprehended that some mistakes occur in his statements, in consequence of what are conceived to be his false views of the nature of perception, and which tend to exhibit their fallacy. In the hope of throwing a little more light upon this interesting and difficult subject, the following observations, in the form of remarks upon the doctrine of Mr. Stewart, are submitted to the reader. In the

*First place,* Mr. Stewart seems to have fallen into a mistake with reference to the notions, which, as he says, the mind is led to form, through the medium of sensation. "The impressions made upon the senses furnish," he says, "the occasions on which we form," *i. e.* originally, "the notion of sounds, smells, flavours, colours, &c." This language necessarily implies, that we have *notions* of these qualities distinct from the sensations which they produce. It has been shewn, however, that the senses of hearing, smelling, tasting, &c. give us no knowledge even of the *existence* of external bodies; and far less of those *qualities* which occasion the sensations to which we refer. Even in adult years, we have no notions of these qualities; we can have none. We have, indeed, a full conviction, derived from another source, that there is something external, which occasions these sensations. But the

notions to which Mr. Stewart refers, as being the result of impressions upon the senses, and of which he seems to have mistaken the nature, are *notions of the sensations themselves*, and not of the *qualities* which awaken them. When we think of fragrance in a rose, for instance, what notion have we, but of the sensation it produces? Having learned, indeed, the existence of the rose, and found that, in a certain relation to it, the sensation of fragrance is excited, we believe there is *something* in the rose which awakens it; but it is an abuse of language to call this belief *a notion of the quality.*

The *second remark* relates to Mr. Stewart's assertion, that many of our ideas cannot be traced to consciousness.* This is doubtless true, in a certain sense, yet it is by no means distinctly explained by Mr. Stewart, nor does it appear to be generally understood. Mr. Stewart seems to regard consciousness as a *power* by which the mind, so to speak, inspects itself—its various thoughts and feelings; or as the act of inspection: and he would seem to mean that, when the mind looks within, it finds the notions to which he refers already there; so that their origin cannot be ascribed either to the power, or the exercise of consciousness. It is, however, a necessary consequence of his doctrine, concerning consciousness, that the *knowledge of our notions*, though not perhaps the *notions themselves*, must be traced to consciousness. Notions, or ideas, might have existed in the mind, according to this system, while we knew it not, if God had not added to our other mental faculties, the supposed power of consciousness! Who can believe it? If consciousness, on the other hand, be a general term, comprehending

* *Vide* Philosophical Essays, Chap. ii.

the whole of our mental states, so that the consciousness of the moment is the state—the thought, or feeling—of the moment; it is obviously absurd not only to trace *some*, as Mr. Stewart says, but to trace *any*, of our notions to consciousness; for that would be to trace the notion to the notion. Our notions must be traced to the circumstances in which the mind is placed, in connexion with the nature of the mind itself, as formed to become the subject of certain ideas in those circumstances. A certain sensation is instantly followed by the notion of something without, as the cause of it; in this case the notion may be traced to the sensation; though it is, as Mr. Stewart says, rather the occasion than the cause of it—that cause being, properly speaking, in the constitution of the mind itself.

*Thirdly*, the most serious mistake which Mr. Stewart has committed, is the denial, that many of the notions, into the origin of which he inquires, are subjects of consciousness. It is a mistake, produced by the opinion entertained by him, and Dr. Reid, that we know the primary qualities of matter, as they are in themselves, so that the notions we form of them are essentially different from those which we entertain with regard to the secondary qualities. He says of many of the simple notions, which in consequence of prior sensations we are led to form, that "they bear no resemblance to any thing of which we are conscious within ourselves"—that "they are not subjects of consciousness;" *i. e.* in effect, that they are not mental states, or feelings, or operations; for if they are, they must be subjects of consciousness, according to Mr. Stewart's own statement, that "consciousness is an inseparable concomitant of all the present operations of the mind." Indeed, the manner in which he speaks

with regard to consciousness in general, in the second chapter of his Philosophical Essays, appears to me peculiarly dark and objectionable. "From consciousness we derive," he states "all our notions of the faculties and operations of the mind. In analyzing them, we arrive at certain simple notions, or ideas; and these," he adds, "form the *only* direct and appropriate subjects of consciousness, in the strict acceptation of that word." If this statement be correct, none of our *feelings* are subjects of consciousness. Simple *notions*, or *ideas* only, are to be thus denominated; and not even the whole of them—notions of extension, and figure, are expressly excluded. And of such notions, though they are, according to Mr. Stewart's own philosophy, *operations* of the mind, or as much *states* of the mind, as *sensations* themselves, he yet maintains, that they bear no resemblance to any thing of which the mind is conscious!! Now, as few things can be more manifest than that *notions* of extension, &c. constitute a part of the consciousness of the mind; or that they are, in Mr. Stewart's phraseology, the things of which the mind is conscious, it seems to me impossible to account for the manner in which Mr. Stewart writes, without supposing that he has unconsciously identified the *quality* of extension which is without the mind, with the *notion* of extension which is in the mind.

This mistake, for such I believe it to be, is visible in the whole of what Mr. Stewart has written on this subject. "Sensations," he says, "furnish the occasions on which the notions of extension, &c. arise in the mind;" which notions, he tells us, "are not the subjects of consciousness;"—"resemble nothing of which the mind is conscious." On the same ground he might deny that our notions, as he calls them, of

any of the objects of sense, are subjects of consciousness. His language, with regard to them, is precisely similar. "Impressions made by external objects upon the organs of sense, furnish the occasions on which the notions of colours, sounds, tastes, &c. arise in the mind." Now why does he not apply his doctrine here also? Why does he not say that the notions of sounds, colours, &c. are not subjects of consciousness? There is no conceivable reason why the notion, in the latter case, should be a subject of consciousness, and in the former case not. The probability is, that Mr. Stewart did not confound so completely the notion of sounds, colours, &c. with the external cause, as the notion of extension; and hence the difference in his statements.

These remarks will prepare the reader, not indeed to adopt the doctrine which Mr. Stewart attributes to Mr. Locke, viz. that consciousness is exclusively the source of all our knowledge, but to admit that knowledge cannot extend beyond the bounds of consciousness. External objects make impressions upon the organs of sense; these impressions are followed by sensations; and these sensations, at least some of them, are attended with the conception of something external as the cause of them. Now what is known here, let me ask, but our consciousness? We know the sensation we experience in a particular case; but that is our consciousness. We refer the sensation to an external object; but that reference again being a state, or, as Dr. Reid would say, an operation of mind, is our consciousness. We form a notion, it may be, of the object which awakened the sensation; but still that notion is our consciousness. However clear the *notion* of any thing external may be, it is still only a notion; it is not the *quality* itself; it cannot, in the

nature of the case, bear the least resemblance to it. We know nothing, we can know nothing, of external objects, but that they occasion certain sensations, notions, or ideas; *i. e.* that they are the occasions of particular states of consciousness. Should it be objected that this is not to know the objects themselves, I answer, that it is knowledge with which, however, we must be satisfied, since the hope of attaining any other is perfectly delusive. To affirm that we possess any knowledge of external objects, which does not resemble any thing of which the mind is conscious, is to confound the cause and the effect; it is to say, in effect, either that knowledge is *out* of the mind, or that external objects are *in* it.

Thus sensation, though one of the lowest of the mental powers, being possessed by man in common with brutes—some species of which are distinguished by an acuteness and extent of the sensitive powers, in some of the organs, which were never possessed by man in any stage or period of his existence—is that power which connects us with the external world. "It is the germ of intellect, and the avenue to knowledge." "In the order of feelings called sensations," says Dr. Brown; "we find the rude elements of all our knowledge—the materials on which the mind is ever operating, and without which, it seems to us almost impossible to conceive that it could ever have operated at all, or could, even in its absolute inactivity, have been conscious of its own inert existence."*

Having made these general remarks with reference to the nature of sensation, we proceed to the classification of our sensations. It has been already observed, that it is better to arrange those together

* Vol. I. p. 399.

which are received through the medium of the same organ. In conformity with this proposed plan of proceeding, let us go on to consider those sensations which are received through the medium of the organ of smell.

## Class I.—*Sensations of Smell.*

It will be advisable to consider,

I. The organ of smell.

II. The sensations which are received by means of this organ.

III. The properties of external bodies, by which these sensations are excited.

IV. The knowledge which the mind derives from them.

I. We are to consider the organ of smell. This consists, as it is well known, in a set of nerves distributed through the delicate and very sensible mucous membrane which lines the cavities of the nostrils, and the sinuses with which they communicate. They arise, we are told, from the brain, in a triangular form; and, passing over the frontal bone, are conducted to each side of the nostrils, and spread out in numerous and minute ramifications on the membrane referred to above. The whole of this delicate organization is defended by the bones of the nose, which are admirably adapted to preserve it from injury, and to assist in speech and respiration.

II. The sensations which are received by means of this organ. When this organ is affected by a cause, and in a manner, the nature of which eludes our researches, a certain state of mind is produced, varying with the nature of the cause from which

it results; this state of mind we call the sensation of smell. It is impossible to define or to describe it; all the simple and original feelings of our nature must be experienced in order to be known. How it comes to pass that this peculiar mental affection should be invariably subsequent to the organic change, and what is the nature of the connexion which exists between the two, philosophy is totally unable to explain. We have nothing more to say, than that such is the constitution of our nature, which is only another phrase for the will and appointment of God.

The sensations received by this sense are numerous and diversified. When we compare them together, we can perceive very few resemblances, or contrarieties, or, indeed, relations of any kind between them. They differ so much from each other, as scarcely to admit of classification; though we have a few generic terms, such as sweet, stinking, musty, &c. For the most part, however, we are constrained to designate them by proper names, according to the causes which produced them; "such as the smell of a rose, of a jessamine, &c." With regard to the terms by which the modifications of this class of sensations are distinguished, it has been well observed "that they are few, and often such as were primarily applicable to other classes of sensations. There appears a kind of borrowing system—a system of mutual transfer of signs, to denote ideas of sensation; in consequence of which, language, first applicable to one, is rendered as applicable to another. Thus we speak of a sweet smell, and a sour smell; but the terms sweetness and sourness are applicable to the sensations of taste. We also speak of a sharp or a pungent smell; but these are terms first applied

to the sense of touch, though, at the same time, they convey ideas that are clear and intelligible. This poverty of terms with reference to the different sensations of which we are conscious, is not to be regretted; for if there were distinct terms appropriated to each distinct sensation, we should need a dictionary for the terms of every sense, and the signs of language would be infinite. They are, however, sufficient for the common purposes of life, and for scientific investigation."

Most of the sensations received by means of this sense, are naturally agreeable or disagreeable. It is imagined by some writers, that none of them are originally indifferent,—a point on which it is impossible to speak with any degree of well-founded certainty. Some of the causes which produce them, are most powerful in their operation; and others are even fatal by their influence upon the lungs.

The sense of smell is far from being an unimportant part of our mental constitution. It assists us in the selection of food, apprising us of the existence of qualities which might prove injurious to us. It guards us against an atmosphere, impregnated with vapours, which might extinguish life. It contributes its share to the general happiness of the human race—and by no means an inconsiderable share, in consequence of the numerous sources of gratification. "The fragrance of the fields," says Dr. Brown, "enters largely into that obscure, but delightful group of images, which rise in our minds on the mere names of spring, summer, the country; and seems to represent the very forms of ethereal beauty, as if it were the very breath of heaven itself. If we imagine all the innumerable flowers which nature pours out, like a tribute of incense to the God who is adorning her, again to be

stripped, in a single moment, of their odour, though they were to retain all their bright diversities of colouring, it would seem as if they were deprived of a spirit which animates them; how cold and dead would they instantly become,—and how much should we lose of that vernal joy, which renders the season of blossoms almost a new life to ourselves."*

III. The properties of external bodies which produce these sensations, are generally denominated odours; the term, however, when used in reference to *properties*, conveys no definite idea. Minute particles, called effluvia, are thrown off from certain bodies which are said, on that account, to be odoriferous. These particles, as it has been imagined, repel each other, and so become widely diffused in the atmosphere; and, by being drawn into the nostrils along with the air, produce the sensations of which we have spoken. And as the effluvia is thus scattered in the air, "there is manifest appearance of design," says Dr. Reid, "in placing the organ of smell in the inside of that canal, through which the air is continually passing in inspiration and expiration."

That the sensation of smell is actually produced by effluvia thus emitted by the odoriferous body, is not a mere hypothesis; it is capable of direct proof. In some cases we see the particles (as of snuff) from which the sensation results; and in others there can be no doubt that effluvia is thrown off, and excites the sensation. Cover a rose, for instance, with a glass receiver, and no sensation of smell will be experienced. The glass is impervious to the particles of matter which the rose throws off; hence it can no longer be perceived by this sense. It appears from this circum-

* Vol. I. p. 449.

stance, that the effluvia of bodies must be inferior, in point of minuteness, to the particles of light; yet that they are inconceivably small, is established by well-known facts. A grain of musk will diffuse its odour for years, without any perceptible diminution of its weight; and a box, in which it was once enclosed, although frequently washed, will retain the scent of it for years.

It has been thought by some, that there is no body which does not emit this effluvia, though our organs are not sufficiently delicate to be, in all cases, affected by it. The supposition is, to a certain degree, sanctioned by the fact, that blood-hounds, &c. are sensible of odours, when we perceive none.

Some confusion of ideas on this subject, has been produced by the circumstance that the odour, and the resulting sensation, have the same name. Thus the phrase, the smell of a rose, designates a certain quality in the rose, and a certain state or affection of mind. It will be unnecessary, after the statements already made, to guard the reader against supposing, with the vulgar, that there is *any thing* in the rose which *resembles* the sensation; or, with the sceptical philosopher, that there is *nothing* in the rose to *originate* the sensation. He will regard the odour and the sensation, as sustaining the relation of cause and effect; but as bearing no more resemblance to each other, than a blow with a stick, to the pain which results from it.*

IV. The knowledge which the mind derives from these sensations. It will be necessary here to distinguish between different periods of our existence, or to state the amount of information which is conveyed

* *Vide*, on this subject, Reid's Inquiry, pp. 65, 66.

to us by them *at present*, and that which was communicated by them *originally*. It is not to be doubted that the sensation which results from the action of the effluvia of a rose upon the organ, conveys to us *now* an assurance both of the existence and the presence of that flower. But was it so *originally*? Nothing can be more manifest than that it ought to have been so, if perception be an original power of the mind, like sensation—a power given to us for the express purpose of obtaining, through the medium of our sensations, a knowledge of external objects, and of their properties. In that case, it is certain that the very first time we experienced the sensation of which we are speaking, we should have been able to say, in the same sense, and with as much confidence as now, "I smell a rose." But is it so in point of fact? I admit that it is impossible to ascertain, with perfect accuracy, what is passing in the mind of the infant metaphysician; but there is no reason whatever to induce the opinion, that the knowledge which the sensations of smell communicate to us *at present*, is enjoyed, previously to experience, by him: the supposition that it is so, is utterly unlikely. There is nothing more in the sensation produced by the odour of a rose, to lead to the idea of an external cause, than in the feelings of joy or sorrow. "Had we been endowed with the sense of smell," says Dr. Brown, "and with no other sense whatever, the sensations of this class would have been simple feelings of pleasure, or pain, which we should as little have ascribed to any external cause, as any of our spontaneous feelings of joy or sorrow."—"As a mere change in the form of our being, the sensation of fragrance may suggest to us the necessity of some cause, or antecedent of the change. But it is far from supposing the necessity

of a corporeal cause."—"We class our sensations of smell, as sensations, because we have previously believed in a system of external things," (they do not give us this belief,) "and have found, by universal experience, that the introduction of some new external body, either felt or seen by us, was the antecedent of those states of mind which we denominate sensations of smell, and not of those internal pains or pleasures, which we therefore distinguish from them, as the spontaneous affections of our own independent mind."*

However strange it may appear, since it is totally inconsistent with the distinction he attempts to establish between sensation and perception, it is yet the fact, that Dr. Reid has expressed himself, on this point, in terms precisely similar to those which are employed by Dr. Brown. "By the original constitution of our nature," says he, in his Inquiry, "we are both led to believe that there is a permanent cause of the sensation, and prompted to seek after it; and *experience determines us* to place it in the rose." Again, "Let us therefore suppose a person beginning to exercise the sense of smelling; a little *experience* will discover to him, that the nose is the organ of this sense, and that the air, or something in the air, is a medium of it. And finding, *by further experience*, that when a rose is near, he has a certain sensation; when it is removed, the sensation is gone; he finds" (that is, judges) "a connexion in nature between the rose and the sensation. The rose is considered as a cause, occasion, or antecedent of the sensation; the sensation is an effect or consequent of the presence of the rose; they are associated in the

* Vol. I. pp. 444-5.

mind, and constantly found conjoined in the imagination."* How useless a faculty then is this imagined power of perception, according to Dr. Reid's own statements! It is given us, as he alleges, for the express purpose of discovering the existence and qualities of the bodies by which our sensations are produced; and yet it is not the power of perception after all, but the faculty of judgment, enlightened by experience, which leads us to place the cause of our sensations, and Dr. Reid himself declares this, in the external bodies from which they flow.

## Class II.—*Sensations of Taste.*

1. The organs of this sense are certain nervous papillæ, whose principal seat is the surface of the tongue, and especially its sides and apex, which constitute a most convenient situation for these nerves, inasmuch as by the flexibility of that member, they may be easily brought into contact with the substance to be tasted. It is probable, also, that similar papillæ exist within the substance of the mucous membrane which lines the palate, as we find that the sensation of taste is increased when the sapid body is pressed between the palate and the tongue.

"It is with manifest propriety," says Dr. Reid, that the organ of this sense guards the entrance of the alimentary canal, as that of smell the entrance of the canal for respiration. And from these organs being placed in such manner, that every thing that enters into the stomach must undergo the scrutiny of both senses, it is plain that they were intended by nature to distinguish wholesome food, from that

* Inquiry, p. 75, pp. 67, 68. *Vide* also Stewart, Vol. I. p. 100.

which is noxious. The brutes have no other means of choosing their food; nor would mankind, in the savage state. And it is very probable, that the smell and taste, no way vitiated by luxury or bad habits, would rarely, if ever, lead us to a wrong choice of food among the productions of nature."* Dr. Brown thinks, on the contrary, that there is no reason to suppose that the senses teach us what is wholesome and noxious primarily, and of themselves; though, in the circumstances in which man is brought up, having no necessity to appeal to the mere discrimination of his own independent organs, he admits, with some little appearance of self-contradiction, that it is not easy to say how far his primary instincts,—if it had not been the high and inevitable dignity of his nature to rise above them,—might, of themselves, have operated as directors. "But whatever their primary influence may be, the secondary influence of his organs of taste and smell," he adds, "are not less important. When we have once completely learned what substances are noxious, and what are salutary, we then, however similar they may be in their other sensible qualities, discriminate these as often as they are again presented to us, by that taste, or smell, which they affect with different sensations; and our acquired knowledge has thus ultimately, in guiding our choice, the force and vivacity of an original instinct."†

II. With the nature of the sensations received by means of this sense, we are well acquainted; though, as in the case of smell, they admit neither of definition, nor of description. A celebrated naturalist has endeavoured to show that at least sixteen

* Inquiry, p. 82. † Vol. I, pp. 451-2.

different simple tastes exist. These admit, however, of an almost boundless number of modifications, from their different combinations—their various degrees of intensity and weakness—the quickness or slowness with which they arise on the contact of the nerve, and the sapid body—the time of their continuance—and the different parts of the organ which they principally affect.

It is an excellent observation of Dr. Reid, that "nature seems studiously to have set bounds to the pleasures and pains we have by the senses of smell and of taste, and to have confined them within very *narrow* limits, that we might not place any part of our happiness in them, there being hardly any smell or taste so disagreeable, that use will not make it tolerable, and at last, perhaps, agreeable; nor any so agreeable, as not to lose its relish by constant use. Neither is there any pleasure or pain of these senses which is not introduced, or followed, by some degree of its contrary, which nearly balances it. So that we may here apply the beautiful allegory of Socrates; that although pleasure and pain are contrary in their nature, and their faces look different ways, yet Jupiter hath tied them so together, that he that lays hold of the one, draws the other along with it."*

These statements of Dr. Reid afford an easy explanation of what are called acquired tastes.

III. The properties of external bodies which produce these sensations are called flavours; but what they are in themselves we know not. Dr. Reid thinks it probable, that every thing that affects the taste is soluble in the saliva. "It is not conceivable," he says, "how any thing should enter readily, and of its own

* Inquiry, p. 84.

accord, as it were, into the pores of the tongue, palate, and fauces, unless it had some chemical affinity to that liquor, with which these pores are always replete. "It is, therefore," he adds, "an admirable contrivance of nature, that the organs of taste should always be moist with a liquor which is so universal a menstruum."

IV. With regard to the knowledge which the mind derives from these sensations, similar remarks may be made with those which were suggested in reference to the sensations of smell; it is unnecessary to repeat them. Suffice it to say, with Dr. Brown, that "though, in our present state of knowledge, we immediately refer them to something which is bitter, or sweet, or acrid, or of some other denomination of sapid quality, and we have no hesitation in classing them as sensations—not as feelings, which arise in the mind, from its own independent constitution; yet if we attend sufficiently to the feeling which arises in the case of taste, we shall find, however immediate the reference to a sapid body may be, that it is truly successive to the simple sensation, and is the mere suggestion of former experience, when a body previously recognised by us as an external substance, was applied to our organ of taste—in the same manner as when we see ashes and dying embers, we immediately infer some previous combustion which we could not have inferred, if combustion itself had been a phænomenon altogether unknown to us."*

* Vol. I. pp. 446-7.

## CLASS III.—*Sensations of Hearing.*

I. The organs. These consist, in man, of the external ear, or auricle, and an internal bony cavity, with numerous circular and winding passages, formed within the temporal bone. These two distinct parts are separated by a strong transparent membrane, stretched across the passage, called the tympanum, or drum of the ear. By this membrane, the vibrations of the air are received from the external ear, and are transmitted through the canals or passages called the labyrinth, to the auditory nerve, which is formed into a beautiful expansion, not unlike the expansion of the optic nerve on the retina. The auditory nerve conveys the impression to the brain, and the immediate result is,

II. The sensation of hearing, the nature of which is known to all who are not destitute of the faculty itself. The prodigious variety of this class of sensations is not less apparent than in the case of those which have been already considered. The ear, we are told, is "capable of distinguishing four or five hundred variations of *tone* in sound, and probably as many different degrees of *strength;* by combining these we have above twenty thousand simple sounds, that differ in tone, or in strength, supposing every tone to be perfect." The same writer, however, justly observes, that the same tone is "susceptible of a boundless variety of modifications. A flute, a violin, a hautboy, and a French horn, may all sound the same tone, and be easily distinguishable: nay, if twenty human voices sound the same note, there will still be some difference. And even the same voice, while it retains its proper distinctions, may be varied

many ways, by sickness or health, youth or age, leanness or fatness, good or bad humour."*

The value of this sense will appear when it is recollected, that to it we are indirectly indebted for the existence of verbal language; the importance of which, whether we consider it as the medium of the reciprocal expression of present feelings in the domestic circle, or reflect upon the benefit which it yields to man as an intellectual, and a moral being, must be regarded as incalculable.

III. The cause of these sensations, is the air thrown into a tremulous, or vibratory state, by the motion of a sonorous body; or by any other means, by which this wave-like motion can be produced. When elastic bodies are struck, a vibratory motion is imparted to the bodies themselves, and communicated by them to the surrounding atmosphere. Every one has observed the concentric circles which are formed in a pool of water by the action of a stone thrown into it. It is probable that similar circles, or waves of air, are produced by the causes mentioned above; and, if the ear be situated within the reach of these circles, a sensation of sound will be produced, vivid in proportion to the density of the wave, or vibration.

IV. The knowledge which is derived through the medium of this sense is obviously not original and instinctive; when, at least, we throw out of our view the sensations themselves. We judge at present, and generally with tolerable accuracy, of the distance of the sonorous body, and of the direction in which it lies; but the sense of hearing originally gives us no information on these points. All this is admitted by

* *Vide* Reid's Inquiry, p. 89.

Dr. Reid himself. "That such a noise is in the street, such another in the room above me; that this is a knock at my door; that, a person walking up-stairs,—is probably learned by experience. Previous to experience, we should as little know whether a sound came from the right or left, from above or below, from a great or a small distance; as we should know whether it was the sound of a drum, or a bell, or a cart. Nature," he adds, "is frugal in her operations, and will not be at the expense of a particular instinct, to give us that knowledge which experience will soon produce, by means of a general principle of human nature."*

We need not hesitate to proceed a step beyond Dr. Reid, and to say, that the sensations of sound would not have suggested to us the notion of any thing external to the mind. "In hearing," says Dr. Brown, "as in taste and smell, we do not derive from its sensations our knowledge of things external; but, *in consequence of our knowledge of things external*, we regard these feelings as sensations, in the common philosophic meaning of the term."† Mr. Stewart even acknowledges that the sense of hearing gives us no knowledge of any thing without us. "By means of the senses of hearing, and smelling, we never could have arrived," he says, "at the knowledge of the existence of things external. All that we could possibly have inferred from our occasional sensations of smell and sound, would have been, that there existed some unknown cause by which they were produced."‡ Mr. Stewart should then tell us, what perception, by the sense of smell, is. According to his own statements, there is originally none. If we can *ever* be said to

* Inquiry, p. 90. † Vol. I. p. 453. ‡ Vol. I. p. 100.

perceive by this sense, we do it, on his principles, as the result of experience; that is, we *learn* to perceive. And what is the difference, in point of absurdity, between the two assertions—if perception be an original power of the mind—"we learn to perceive;" and "we learn to feel?"

How then, it may be asked, do we learn to judge of distance, direction, &c.? The answer is, that there are original diversities in the sensations received by this organ, corresponding with the magnitude, direction, distance, &c. of the sonorous body; a little experience will, consequently, enable us to form a judgment concerning its size, the quarter from whence it proceeds, &c.; which judgment is susceptible, through practice, of indefinite improvement.

It is this sense which renders us capable of the pleasures of harmony; though there is a peculiarity connected with what is called a musical ear, for some excellent remarks upon which, the reader is referred to Dr. Brown, Vol. I. p. 469—481.

## Class IV.—*Sensations of Touch.*

I. The organ. A broad line of distinction exists between the sense of touch, and those which have been previously considered, in reference to the organ. In tasting, and smelling, the organ is one; and even in hearing, there is merely a duplicate; and the organs of these senses occupy particular situations in the body; but the sense, or rather the organ of touch, is diffused all over the surface of the body. The nervous papillæ of the skin appear to be the inlets of that class of sensations, which are now to be considered.

It has been thought by some that there is naturally

greater delicacy, or sensitiveness, in those nerves which are distributed to the hands, and fingers, than has been imparted to any others. The opinion, however, rests on no solid ground. Our sensations of touch, when the object comes in contact with the hands, and fingers, are doubtless *now* more distinct than when it touches any other part of the body. That circumstance is, however, to be ascribed to the frequent exercise of the hands, and fingers, in consequence of the position they occupy in the system; by which exercise, increased delicacy, according to a law of our physical constitution, is obtained. Had it been as convenient to employ the toe as the hand, when it became necessary to examine any object by the sense of touch—and had the toe been employed for that purpose—there is no reason to doubt that the toe would have become as sensitive as the finger.

II. The sensations, &c. I shall very briefly refer to these, together with the qualities from which, as it is thought, they result; and then proceed to the remaining topic of inquiry concerning this sense; as it appears to be the plan best adapted for exhibiting the great and important difference of opinion which exists amongst philosophers in relation to this most difficult part of mental science. Referring to the other senses, Dr. Reid says, "they exhibit only one kind of sensation, and thereby indicate only one quality in bodies. By the ear we perceive sounds, and nothing else; by the palate, tastes; by the nose, odours;" and, we may add, by the eye, colours. "These qualities," continues Dr. Reid, "are all likewise of one order, being all secondary qualities:" (we have seen that there is no perception by the nose, the palate, or the ear,) "whereas by touch we

perceive not one quality only, but many, and those of very different kinds."*

Dr. Reid refers here to the different qualities perceived (*i. e.* as he supposed) by the sense of touch, to shew that the sensations received by it, as the medium, are greatly more diversified than those of any other sense. And even when we have thrown out of our consideration those which Dr. Brown withdraws from this sense, it cannot be doubted, that they differ more generically from each other, than any of the sensations of smell, or hearing, or taste, or sight.

III. The qualities of external bodies to which we owe, according to Dr. Reid, these sensations, are, first, *heat and cold.* The latter is now regarded by philosophers as the mere negation, or absence of heat. Opinion has considerably varied with regard to the true nature of heat, considered as a quality, or a cause of sensation. It was formerly thought to consist in a certain vibration of the particles of the heated body. Of late years it has been regarded as a fluid generally diffused through nature, and accumulated in the heated body. This is a question belonging to physical science, with which we have no concern.

In addition to heat and cold, Dr. Reid specifies hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, figure, solidity, motion, and extension, as qualities which act upon our sense of touch. In examining the correctness of this doctrine, it will be well to avail ourselves of the statements of Dr. Brown, who has made, we think, a successful effort to resolve the whole of the qualities thus enumerated into different modifications of resistance and extension. "Hardness

* Inquiry, p. 99.

and softness," says he, "are expressive only of greater or less resistance; roughness is irregularity of resistance, when there are intervals between the points that resist, or when some of these points project beyond others" (that is, it is—as Mr. Welsh shews, in a most ingenious attempt to resolve all the properties of bodies into attraction and repulsion—the particular position of the particles of substances, occasioned by their (natural) affinities and repulsions); "smoothness is complete uniformity of resistance; liquidity, viscidity, are expressive of certain degrees of yieldingness to our efforts, which solidity excludes, unless when the effort employed is violent." "All, in short," he adds, "are only different species, or degrees, of that which we term resistance, whatever it may be, which impedes our continued effort, and impedes it variously, as the substances without are themselves various." With regard to the other qualities mentioned by Dr. Reid, he thus writes:—"Figure is the boundary of extension, as magnitude is that which it comprehends; and divisibility, if we consider the apparent continuity of the parts which we divide, is only extension under another name. If we except motion, therefore, which is not permanent, but accidental,—and the knowledge of which is evidently secondary to the knowledge which we acquire of our organs of sense, before which the objects are said to move,—and secondary in a much more important sense, as resulting, not from any direct immediate organic state of one particular moment, but from a comparison of sensations past and present,—all the information which we are supposed to receive primarily and directly from touch, relates to modifications of resistance and extension.*

* Vol. I. pp. 487-8.

All the sensations then which these qualities, or any others, which act upon the organs of touch produce, may be included under sensations of heat and cold; of puncture and laceration; of hardness and extension.

IV. The knowledge which these sensations convey. The terms heat and cold, denote both the sensation and the quality. The former, as Dr. Reid says, is perfectly known; it neither is, nor can be, any thing else than it is felt to be. The cause of the sensation, or the quality, is unknown. Whatever be the nature of that quality of bodies which we call heat, he elsewhere tells us, it cannot in the least degree resemble the sensation of heat. To suppose a resemblance, he assures us, would be as absurd as to imagine that the pain of the gout resembles a square or a triangle. He admits also further, that even in adult age, it is only known relatively, *i. e.* as the unknown external cause of a certain well-known sensation. When, therefore, we say, "I perceive that the body is hot," what can be meant more than that it gives us the sensation of heat? Yet on Dr. Reid's principles, it must imply something more. It is manifest, however, that even this knowledge, imperfect as it is, is more than we derive from the sensation originally. Independently of all others, it would merely suggest the idea of a cause, not of a cause *ad extra*. It is unnecessary to repeat remarks which have been made with reference to the other senses. "It is quite evident," says Dr. Brown, "that in classing our warmth or chillness as a sensation, and not as a feeling that has arisen spontaneously in the mind, we are influenced by that experience which has previously given us the belief of things external, at least of our own corporeal frame; and that, if we had been unsusceptible of any other

sensations than those of heat and cold, we should as little have believed them to arise directly from a corporeal cause, as any of our feelings of joy or sorrow."*

Similar remarks may be made with reference to the sensations resulting from puncture and laceration. Even at present, as we had occasion to observe formerly, they do not invariably apprise us of the particular part of the body injured; and, originally, they would have given us no conception even of the existence of the body.

There are, however, as it is generally imagined at least, other sensations,—the sensations of hardness and extension, received by means of this sense, and which give us, of themselves, and originally, the knowledge of matter, and of its primary qualities. Indeed, Dr. Reid expressly assures us, that by the writers who had preceded him, it had been "always taken for granted that the ideas of hardness, extension, figure, and motion, enter into the mind by the sense of touch, in the same manner as the sensations of sound and smell do by the ear and nose."† This error is too flagrant to need any lengthened refutation. There is an essential difference between a sensation, and an idea or a notion. And no one now, I imagine, believes that an idea, or a notion, is in any case the *direct* result of the action of an external body upon an organ of sense. That action produces a sensation—and a sensation only: the sensation may become the immediate antecedent to an idea, in no respect resembling itself, or we may form a notion of the sensation after it has subsided; but the idea or notion must not be transformed into a sensation, by being represented as flowing directly from a certain impression upon an organ of sense.

* P. 487. † Inquiry, p. 121.

Dr. Reid has very carefully distinguished between the *sensations* of hardness, extension, &c. which, as he conceives, are received by the sense of touch; and the *notions* to which, as he further conceives, they give rise. "There is," says he, "no doubt, a sensation by which we perceive a body to be hard or soft. This sensation of hardness," he adds, "may easily be had, by pressing one's hand against the table, and attending to the feeling that ensues, setting aside, as much as possible, all thought of the table and its qualities, or of any external thing." And, having stated the difficulty of attending to this sensation, he proceeds to declare that a philosopher must vanquish it, or that it will be impossible for him to reason justly upon the subject.*

The foregoing quotation is given for the sole purpose of showing that Dr. Reid did not regard our *notions* of hardness and resistance, as constituting, if we may so speak, *sensations* of touch. In this we think he was right. His error, as we imagine, consisted in regarding, what he calls sensations of hardness and extension, as sensations *of touch*,—and so, in making our conception and belief of an external world, to arise, by a law of our nature, out of the feelings proper to this sense.

Dr. Brown, on the contrary, considers the feelings of hardness, or, in other words, of resistance, as radically different from the proper sensations of touch; and as originating from another source, viz. from the muscular frame, which is not, he says, "merely a part of the living machinery of motion, but is also truly an organ of sense."

His statements on this subject, deserve our most

* Inquiry, p. 105.

particular attention, and are in substance as follows: He commences with the important remark, that the sense of touch must have a sensation peculiar to itself. Of this it does not seem possible to doubt. In the case of any of the senses which have been considered, it may become a question, what degree of knowledge we gain by means of the feelings which are peculiar to each; but that smell has its peculiar feelings, and hearing, and taste, in like manner, all, it is imagined, will admit. It is the same with regard to the sense of touch. *There is a certain state of mind, which is the invariable consequent of the contact of an external substance, and any part of the body;* in the same manner, as there is a certain state of mind connected, originally, with the impression, which the odour of a rose, for instance, makes upon the olfactory nerves. The question then is, What is this state of mind? We have already seen, that it is not the *notion* or belief of hardness and extension. Dr. Reid thinks it is the *sensation* or feeling of hardness and extension, out of which arises, he supposes, by intuition, the conception and belief of an external world. Dr. Brown denies that even the *feeling* of hardness is the proper sensation of touch; and, to ascertain what are the simple original feelings of this sense, he says, "let us imagine a being endowed with the sense of touch, and with every other sense and faculty of the mind, but not with any previous knowledge of his own corporeal frame, or of other things external; and let us suppose a small body of any shape to be pressed, for the first time, on his open hand. Whatever feeling mere touch can give of itself, would of course be the same in this case as *now*." Now what would this feeling be? Would it be the *sensation* of hardness and extension? No; that arises, at any rate the sensation of

*hardness* arises, when we afterwards attempt to grasp the body, and the muscular effort is impeded; a feeling which, as every one may judge, is essentially different from that which results from the mere application of the same body to the open palm. "When I move my arm," says Dr. Brown, "without resistance, I am conscious of a certain feeling; when the motion is impeded by the presence of an external body, I am conscious of a *different* feeling, arising partly, indeed, from the mere sense of touch in the moving limb compressed, but not consisting merely in this impression, since, when the same pressure is made by a foreign force, without any muscular effort on my part, my general feeling is very different."*

The proper sensation of touch is not then the feeling of hardness, extension, &c., as Dr. Reid imagines, since that feeling is not produced by mere contact. It arises only when muscular effort is impeded; and is, therefore, to be ascribed to the muscular frame. Mr. Welsh has very accurately distinguished between the simple original feelings of touch, and others which succeed it. "The tactual feeling," says he, "upon the pressure of a foreign substance, is one species of mental state; the muscular sensation, upon having an accustomed movement impeded, is another; the notion of an external quality, as extension or figure, is a third; and is as easily distinguished from the second as the first."†

This distinction between the proper feelings of touch, and the muscular feelings, is of immense importance when we attempt to estimate the amount of information, concerning external things, which is derived from this sense. Smelling, tasting, and

* Vol. I. p. 501. † Memoirs, p. 249.

hearing, it is admitted on all hands, could give us no notion of any thing out of ourselves. Is then the proper sensation of touch—the feeling which is produced by mere contact, when there is no impeded muscular exertion—better adapted to originate it? I feel compelled to answer this question in the negative. The sense of touch does not appear to me more able to originate the notion of an external world, than the sense of smell. It is impossible for any one to exhibit this sentiment, in a more luminous point of view, than Dr. Reid, how much soever his statements may be at variance with other parts of his system; I therefore quote his words. Having represented the case of a blind man, who has lost all the knowledge he had gained by the sense of touch, and who is in fact destitute of all knowledge, he says, "We shall first suppose his body fixed immoveably in one place, and that he can only have the feelings of touch, by the application of other bodies to it. Suppose him first to be pricked with a pin; this will no doubt give him a smart sensation,—he feels pain,—but what can he infer from it? Nothing sure with regard to the existence or figure of a pin"—"Having had formerly no notion of body, or of extension, the prick of a pin can give him none."

"Suppose next, a body not pointed, but blunt, is applied to his body, with a force gradually increased until it bruises him. What has he got by this but another sensation, or train of sensations, from whence he is able to conclude as little as from the former."

"Suppose further, that the body applied to him touches a larger or lesser part of his body. Can this give him any notion of its extension or dimensions? To me it seems impossible that it should, unless he had

some previous notice of the dimensions and figure of his own body to serve him as a measure."

The Doctor proceeds in the same way to shew, that a body drawn along his hands, or his face, while they are at rest—or an effort to move, or the actual movement of any limb, would give him no notion of space or motion. And he concludes his statement with the following memorable words: "Upon the whole it appears, that our philosophers have imposed upon themselves, and upon us, in pretending to deduce from sensation, the first origin of our notions of external existences, of space, motion, and extension, and all the primary qualities of bodies, that is, the qualities whereof we have the most clear and distinct conception."*

Now if our knowledge even of the primary qualities is not deduced from sensation, how could the Doctor affirm afterwards, as he does, that it is "the business of the senses to make us feel, and to make us *perceive*?" *i. e.* in other words, that it is the business of the senses to put us in possession of knowledge which cannot, after all, be deduced from sensation!

In opposition to this reasoning, designed to shew that the mere sensations of touch can give us, of themselves, no more knowledge of resistance and extension—to which, as we have seen, all the primary qualities, as they are called, may be reduced—than those of smell, taste, &c., it will be said, perhaps, that we now appear, at any rate, to perceive these qualities by the sense of touch—to *feel* a body to be hard, large or small, round or square. This is freely admitted; it does not, however, follow from this, that the sense of touch of itself, originally, gives us any notion either of hardness or

* *Vide* Inquiry, p. 120—129.

extension. We now seem to perceive the distance of bodies by the eye, but the case recorded by Cheselden, proves, beyond all doubt, that our knowledge of distance is gained by an act of judgment, not of perception. It appears impossible, in the very nature of things, that the mere sense of touch should give us the notion of hardness. There must exist, on any system, the *sensation* of hardness, *i. e.* the feeling of resistance, in order to the existence of the *notion* of hardness. But the sensation of hardness, or the *feeling* of resistance, cannot exist where there is *no* resistance; *i. e.* it cannot arise from mere contact. There must be impeded muscular effort, in order to the rise of the *feeling* of resistance; and the *notion* of hardness arises *out* of this latter feeling; if, indeed, it be any thing else than a notion of the feeling of resistance, or of the sensation of hardness itself.

Nor is it less manifest, it is imagined, that the notion of extension is not conveyed to the mind by the sense of touch. The argument by which the affirmation has been supported, must have had its origin in the dark ages; it cannot endure the light of the present day. It is as follows. The object which impresses the organ of touch, covers a portion of that organ corresponding exactly in size with itself; we must therefore perceive by touch, the size and form, the roundness or squareness of the body. Against this argument there lie the following objections:

*First*, it supposes the knowledge of the existence of the body; *i. e.* it supposes the knowledge of an external world,—for the body is as much external to the mind, as is the sun in the firmament; in other words, it presupposes the possession of that knowledge which the sense of touch was given us, according to these notions, for the express purpose of obtaining. The

statement we are now considering, most strangely forgets that the infant metaphysician knows no more that he has a body, than that he is surrounded by forms of inimitable beauty. To gain this knowledge is the precise difficulty. This first step being taken, all the subsequent ones are perfectly easy and intelligible; now our opponents generously leave us to take this first step in the best way we can.

*Secondly*, it would not account for the perception of extension by the sense of touch, even if this difficulty, with reference to the existence of the body, were surmounted; for, as Dr. Brown justly observes, "It is not in our organ of touch merely, that a certain extent of the nervous extremity of our sensorial organ is affected. This occurs equally in every other organ. In the superficial expansion of the nerves of hearing, smell, taste, for example, it is not a *point* merely that is affected, but a *number of continuous points* precisely as in the superficial organ of touch; and if, therefore, the notion of *extension* in general, or of *figure*, which is *limited extension*, arose whenever a portion of the nervous expansion was affected in any way, we should derive these notions as much from a taste, or a smell, or a sound, as from any of the configurations or affections of our organs of touch,"—*i. e.* "we should have square inches, and half inches, of fragrance and sound."*

*Thirdly*, it is contradicted by fact; for, in innumerable cases, the mere sense of touch does not enable us to judge of form. If a body, in ever so slight a degree irregular in form, is pressed upon any part of our tactual organ, we find ourselves unable, even after all the experience we have had with regard to objects of touch, to determine, with precision, without using

* Vol. I. pp. 505-6.

the organ of sight, its magnitude and figure. The knowledge of form and extension is not then gained by the sense of touch; "for if touch were truly the direct and primary sense of magnitude and form, as hearing is the sense of sound, it should be equally the sense of every variety of these, as hearing is the sense of every variety of sound." If there be a single case in which touch fails to give us the knowledge of form, magnitude, extension, &c., we may certainly gather from that fact, that the sense of touch is incapable of itself of imparting this knowledge, so that wherever it exists, it must be traced to a different source.*

The amount of what has been said may be thus stated. Touch must have its peculiar sensation, as well as the senses of taste, hearing, &c.; *i. e.* there is a certain state of mind which is the direct result of the contact of an external body with any part of the animal frame—that state of mind is not the *notion* of hardness and extension; *i. e.* it is not the notion and belief of an external world—it is not even the *sensation* of hardness or the feeling of resistance,—it is merely, in all cases, the kind of feeling which is produced by the pressure of a body upon the open palm—a feeling essentially different from the sensation of hardness or the feeling of resistance. Impeded muscular effort alone can give rise to this latter feeling, out of which grows the notion of an external world; so that touch merely suggests the hardness and figure of bodies, in consequence of associations formed between bodies of different forms and degrees of solidity, and the tactual feelings which result from contact with them—in the same manner as different sensations of vision suggest the distances of bodies.

* *Vide* Brown, Vol. I. pp. 508-9, 545-6.

There still remains for our consideration the important question, "In what manner do the conception and belief of things external arise out of impeded muscular effort, or the feeling of resistance? Is it by intuition connected with this feeling, or may the fact be otherwise explained?" Dr. Brown contends that our faith in the existence of things without the mind does not rest upon any peculiar intuition; that it is to be traced to "that more general intuition by which we consider a new consequent, in any series of accustomed events, as a sign of a new antecedent, and of that equally general principle of association, by which feelings that have frequently co-existed flow together, and constitute afterwards one complex whole."*

My limits will not allow me to give even the substance of the statements by which this opinion is defended.† They display, to great advantage, the unrivalled talents of the writer; but I am constrained to say, that I cannot regard them as perfectly satisfactory. On this most difficult subject, I am rather disposed to agree with those who ascribe our belief in the existence of an external world to a peculiar intuition. A body comes in contact with the palm of the hand—the fingers close upon it—they instinctively press it—the feeling of resistance is experienced; and that feeling, by a law of the mind, instantly suggests the notion of something external, and, antecedently to all experience, is referred to it as its cause. There is nothing in the mere tactual feeling, as we have seen, which appears adapted to originate the idea of any thing external. Nor does the muscular feeling

* Vol. I. p. 508.

† If it should not too much increase the size of this volume, I will give the substance in a note at the end.

seem to me more likely to awaken it. It is a mere sensation, which will indeed lead to the conception of a *cause*, but which no more involves the notion of an *external* cause, than the fragrance of the violet or the rose.

I am happy to find the sentiments of Mr. Welsh in harmony with the statements given above. "By the muscular feelings," says this writer, "we could not have the idea of *outness;* for, in the case supposed, the little reasoner has not arrived at the knowledge of his own organ of sensation, as something extended, and capable of resistance."—"Without the idea of one material object, we have no foundation for arriving at the idea of any other. And as the idea of one such object must be taken for granted in every theory of the origin of our notions of other material existences, it seems to follow that this idea, at least, must be ascribed to some primitive law of our nature."*

The intuitive belief for which we plead goes no further, it is however imagined, than to the bare existence of something external to us. The magnitude, form, &c. of bodies are learned, we think, by experience; and the tactual feeling, being always associated with the muscular feeling, inasmuch as we must touch what we grasp, suggests at length, though it did not do it originally, the notion of hardness, or of a resisting, extended, and external mass.

And if the belief of an external world is founded on intuition, we cannot fail to perceive the absurdity of all attempts either to support or to overthrow it, by an effort of reasoning. To reason in defence of

* Memoirs, pp. 247-8.

any proposition, is to attempt to shew that it rests upon some self-evident truth—on a truth, *i.e.* which we are led by our nature, or rather, by that God who formed it, to believe as soon as the terms in which it is expressed are understood. When we have shown that any proposition does rest upon a self-evident truth, we have proved it; to proceed further is impossible. No self-evident proposition then can be proved; it yields proof to others, but can itself derive it from none. And, on the other hand, to reason against an intuitive truth, is an act of absurdity or madness. No arguments can be brought against it, but such as professedly derive their validity from a truth of the same order with that which is assailed. If, therefore, the proposition attacked could be conceived to be weak, the weapons of attack must be equally weak, and so cannot overthrow it. It is impossible to prove by argument the existence of an external world, for the same reason that we cannot *prove* two and two to be equal to four; or the whole greater than a part. And the man who should undertake to overthrow, by argument, our established belief on this subject, would prove nothing but his own folly or insanity.

### Class V.—*Sensations of Sight.*

This is by far the most important of our senses. It furnishes us with information so essential, as well as valuable, that if the race of man had been incapable of acquiring it, the very possibility of their continued existence seems scarcely conceivable. Dr. Reid has admirably illustrated the incomparable value of this sense, by supposing a world of human beings destitute of it. "How incredible," says he, "would it appear

to such beings, accustomed only to the slow informations of touch, that, by the addition of an organ, consisting of a ball and socket, of an inch diameter, they might be enabled, in an instant of time, without changing their place, to perceive the disposition of a whole army, the order of a battle, the figure of a magnificent palace, or all the variety of a landscape—to traverse the globe itself; yea, to measure the planetary orbs, and make discoveries in the sphere of the fixed stars."* No sense exhibits, in so striking and delightful a manner, the infinite wisdom and unbounded goodness of the Creator.

I. The organ, or the eye, is situated in a circular orbit, and composed of transparent substances, called humours, of various refractive densities; viz. the aqueous, crystalline, and vitreous humours. The first refraction takes place on the surface of what is called the convex cornea of the eye, which receives the rays of light, converges and transmits them to the aqueous humour, a transparent fluid situated between the cornea and the crystalline humour. The pupil, or perforation in the centre of the iris, admits of the transmission of the rays from the aqueous humour to the crystalline lens; by which they are again refracted, and transmitted to the vitreous humour, in which is placed the retina, or net-like expansion of the optic nerve. After the rays of light have undergone these several refractions, they produce upon the retina a distinct image of the object from which they are reflected; and, according to the degree of perfection with which this image is formed, will the perception, by means of this sensitive power, be clear and distinct.

* Inquiry, p. 154.

In reference to the organ, thus briefly described, it has been well said, "that it is a machine of such exquisite and obvious adaptation to the effects produced by it, as to be, of itself, in demonstrating the existence of the Divine Being who contrived it, equal in force to many volumes of theology. The atheist who has seen and studied its internal structure, and yet continues an atheist, may be fairly considered as beyond the power of mere argument to reclaim." "Were there no example in the world of contrivance, except that of the eye," says Dr. Paley, "it would be alone sufficient to support the conclusion which we draw from it, as to the necessity and existence of an intelligent Creator. Its coats and humours, constructed as the lenses of a telescope are constructed, for the refraction of the rays of light to a point, which forms the proper action of the organ—the provision, in its muscular tendons, for turning its pupil to the object, similar to that which is given to the telescope by screws, and upon which power of direction in the eye, the exercise of its office, as an optical instrument, depends—the further provision for its defence, for its constant lubricity and moisture, which we see in its socket, and its lids, in its gland, for the secretion of the matter of tears, its outlet, or communication with the nose, for carrying off the liquid after the eye is washed with it;—these provisions compose altogether an apparatus, a system of parts, a preparation of means, so manifest in their design, so exquisite in their contrivance, so successful in their issue, so precious and so infinitely beneficial in their use, as, in my opinion, to bear down all doubt that can be raised upon the subject."*

* Nat. Theol. pp. 81, 82. *Vide* also p. 19—32.

It is perfectly unnecessary to say any thing with respect to the sensations of sight, in distinction from the knowledge which the mind obtains through the medium of this sense.

II. The exciting causes of these sensations are generally said to be colours. But what are colours? They are produced, we are told, by rays of light falling upon bodies which possess the power of refraction and reflection. It is manifest, however, that this answer leaves the subject in all its original obscurity. It does not tell us *how* they are produced, or *where* they are produced—whether they are actual qualities in the bodies themselves, or mere sensations of the mind which contemplates them. "The philosophical idea of colours," says Dr. Watts, "is to consider them to be nothing but sensations excited in the mind by the variously refracted rays of light reflected on the eye, in a different manner, according to the different size or shape of the particles of which the surfaces of these bodies are composed; and to suppose them in the bodies themselves, is the vulgar error."*

Sir Isaac Newton says, more correctly, that "coloured bodies derive their colour not from the bodies themselves, but from the particular properties they possess, of reflecting some rays very abundantly, and of transmitting, or absorbing others." This distinguished writer had discovered that light consists of rays of different colours, and of different degrees of refrangibility—so that by suffering it to pass through a prism, by which the rays are refracted or bent out of the line of direction in which they entered the prism in different degrees, we obtain a series of

* Logic, Part I. Chap. iii. Sect. 4.

colours, proceeding by regular gradation from red to violet. Bodies which reflect the red rays, appear red to us; bodies which reflect the violet-coloured rays, appear of a violet colour to us, &c. &c. How it happens that some bodies reflect one kind of rays, and others another kind, we know not. It may result from a particular modification of the principles of attraction and repulsion; or it may be the result of some other principle of which we are totally ignorant. And though there must be some difference in the rays which excite different sensations—in the red and violet rays for instance—we can form no conception of the nature of that difference. It is obvious, however, that there can be nothing in those *bodies* which appear red, and nothing in the *red rays* themselves, which bears the most distant resemblance to our sensations of redness. To suppose this would be as absurd as to conceive of pain in the point of a sword.

The preceding statement proceeds on the supposition that light is the object—the exclusive object of vision. Dr. Reid and Mr. Stewart tell us, that some objects of sense operate directly, and others indirectly, upon our organs. In the case of sight, for instance, they imagine that it is the distant object which acts upon the organ; but that its action is carried on through the medium of light. Dr. Brown, on the other hand, states, more justly, as it appears to me, that it is the light which acts upon the organ, and constitutes the object of the sense of sight. The following passage seems fully to confirm his opinion: "It is of importance to remember, that even in the perception of the most distant body, the true object of vision is not the distant body itself, but the light that has reached the expansive termination of the optic

nerve. If the light could exist in the same manner, moving in the same varieties of direction as at present, though no other bodies were in existence than the light itself, and our sensorial organ,—all the sensations of mere sight would be the same as now; and accordingly we find, as light is in a great measure manageable by us, that we have it in our power to vary, at pleasure, the visual notions, which any one would otherwise have formed of bodies, without altering the bodies themselves, or even their position with respect to the eye,—by merely interposing substances to modify the light reflected or emitted from them. The same paper, which we term white when we observe it with our naked eye, seems blue or red, when we look at it through glass of such a kind, as absorbs all the light which enters it, but the rays of those particular colours; and it seems larger or smaller as we look at it through a concave or a convex lens, which leaves the object precisely as it was, and affects only the direction of the rays which come from it; the reason of all which diversities of perception is, that though what we are accustomed to term the object, continues the same, whatever substance be interposed between it and the eye, that which is really the object of vision is different; and our perceptions, therefore, correspond with the diversity of their real objects."*

IV. The knowledge which is derived from the sensations of sight. At present this sense is the inlet to innumerable feelings. On opening our eyes, we perceive the magnitude, distance, figure, and relative position of bodies, as well as their colour. Or, if this be rather an act of judgment, or a suggestion of memory, the result of experience and association, it takes

* Vol. II. pp. 61, 62.

place so instantaneously, that we find it scarcely possible to conceive of a time when the eyes might have been opened without putting us in possession of all the information which the sense of sight now conveys.

Since the days of Berkeley, however, philosophers, with scarcely any exception, have admitted, that the knowledge of the distance, magnitude, and real figure of objects, is the result of information gained by the other senses,—that it may be truly said *we learn* to see,—and that vision is what Swift has paradoxically denominated it, "*the art of seeing things that are invisible.*" The only point in controversy, at present, appears to be whether we gain directly, by the sense of sight, the knowledge of colour merely, or of extension in addition to colour, *i. e.* the knowledge of the length and breadth of bodies.

Before we proceed to make any remarks upon this question, it will be proper to advert, for a moment, to the reasons which led Berkeley, and all who have written upon the subject since his time, to refuse their assent to the opinion of preceding philosophers, that the knowledge of the distance, magnitude, and figure of bodies, is immediately received by sight.

*The evidence of fact is against this opinion.* The celebrated Cheselden performed the operation of couching, upon an adult; when it was found that as soon as the organ began to perform its functions, all objects, at whatever distances, appeared to touch the eye. And whenever a similar operation has been performed, since his time, it has been found, we are told by the most competent judges, that "the actual magnitude, distance, figure, and position of objects, were to be learned, like a new language—that all objects seemed equally close to the eye—and that a

sphere, and a cube, of each of which the tangible figure was previously known, were not so distinguishable in the mere sensation of vision, that the one could be said with certainty to be the cube, and the other the sphere."

The obvious inability of children to measure distances and magnitudes, is nearly, if not altogether, as conclusive on this point, as the cases to which we have referred. Whatever knowledge the sense of sight can in itself convey, must be obtained with the first exercise of the sense: whoever, therefore, has seen (and who has not seen?) an infant stretch out its little hands to grasp the moon, must be convinced that the knowledge of distance, &c. is not derived from this source.

*There are, also, considerations which render it,* à priori, *improbable that this knowledge is received by the sense of sight.* Had it been observed that it is light which constitutes the true object of vision, and not the luminous body itself, the opinion, now opposed, could not have maintained its ground so long. For, "from whatever distance light may come, it is," says Dr. Brown, "but the point of the long line, which terminates at the retina, of which we are sensible, and this terminating point must be the same, whether the ray has come from a few feet of distance, or from many miles."* "The rays, from distant objects, when they produce vision, are as near to the retina, as the rays from objects which are contiguous to the eye." How, therefore, should these rays suggest the notion of unequal distances, unless they do it by intuition?—a notion directly contradicted by the facts to which we have referred; for if the knowledge of distance were instinctive, it would exist in infancy (as appears to be

* Vol. II. pp. 66, 67.

the case among animals) as well as in maturity; and would, further, be immediate in those who have acquired the power of vision, by the surgical operation to which reference has been made.

But if distance is not the direct object of sight, like colour, and if the perception of distance is not instinctive, how is it acquired? It has been usual to suppose that objects appear to us distant, or near, according to the angle which lines proceeding from their boundaries or extremities, subtend upon the eye of the beholder. The reply of Dr. Brown to this statement is irresistible. He says, in substance, that all men are not instinctively geometers, and employed in measuring angles,—that these angles have no real existence, as feelings of the mind of the individual who sees,—and, finally, that it is impossible for the mind to have any knowledge of them. They are formed by rays of light proceeding from distant bodies, and meeting in one focal point at the retina. The angles, therefore, cannot be known, unless the radiant lines, formed by the rays, are known; and how is it possible, in harmony with preceding statements, to conceive that they are known? The distant body from which they proceed, is not the object of vision—the rays, in their progress from it, are not the objects of vision; the point of light which comes in contact with the retina, and this point of light alone, is the object of vision. "Before the rays reach the optic nerve, they are," says Dr. Brown, "as little capable of producing vision, as darkness itself;" (as little capable, we may add, as is the fragrance of a rose of producing sensation, before it reaches the nostril;) "and when they reach the retina, the lines, and consequently the angles, exist no more."*

* Vol. II. p. 78.

Our knowledge of distance, &c. is not, then, derived from the angles which rays of light subtend upon the eye; for, in addition to what has been already said, these angles must be the same, whether the body be viewed on land, or across an expanse of water; yet the apparent distance will be very different. This single fact would prove, were there no other evidence, that the knowledge of which we are speaking, is a result of the principle of association. There is, doubtless, an original diversity in the sensations produced by light (for we must ever bear it in mind that it is by light that the sensations of vision are produced) which proceeds from one body, at a distance, and from another, which is near; it is then perfectly easy to see, how these sensations *may* become, or rather *must* become, signs of the distance of objects. They suggest the notions of nearness, or distance, in the same manner precisely with sounds. In fact, it is only as the result of association, that we come to know from what bodies the light which beams upon our eye is reflected. Light, as we have said, is the only object of vision. It is not the tree, or the house, which stands before us, that we see, but light *merely*, of different kinds, and shades of colour. In the same manner, however, as words become associated with things, so as to suggest them, do the sensations of colour suggest the bodies from which they are reflected.

But if our perceptions of distance, magnitude, &c. &c. should be allowed to be acquired, is not the perception of extension, or of the length and breadth of objects, or rather of colour, involved in the sensations of sight themselves? All philosophers, previous to the time of Dr. Brown, have replied to this question in the affirmative. Dr. Reid maintains that

there is a figure which bodies present to the eye—a figure which involves length and breadth; (or, in other words, that, in the original perceptions of this sense, we see not merely colour, but expanded colour,) but is essentially different from the tangible figure, or the figure which is perceived by the sense of touch, and which is, in fact, the true figure;—that upon this visible figure experience effects no change, it being the same to an infant, or to a man newly made to see, as to us;—that these visible appearances are disregarded by us, nature designing them as *signs* of the tangible figures of bodies, which they suggest, though not intuitively; for though these signs, as he calls them, present the same appearance to a man newly made to see, as to us, yet he would have no knowledge of their signification, whereas to us they constitute a language perfectly familiar, and, therefore, we take no notice of the signs, and attend only to the thing signified by them.*

In support of this opinion, Dr. Reid refers to the art of painting; a proficient in which art, by the different size, and shading, he gives to the objects which he represents, can exhibit them as solid or circular, or distant or near, as well as extended; *i. e.* as Dr. Reid thinks, he can transfer to the canvas the precise appearance which they present to the eye, so that the painting suggests to the mind the same ideas which the scene in nature which it represents would have done.

Dr. Brown, on the other hand, denies that extension is involved in our original perceptions of sight. We see light or colour only, he thinks, not an expanse of colour, or colour of a certain length or breadth.

* Inquiry, pp. 169-70.

The colour now appears figured, *i. e.* extended, only in consequence of being blended, by intimate associations, with the feelings commonly ascribed to touch. He admits that, in our present sensations of sight, it is impossible for us to separate extension from colour; or that objects necessarily appear to us long and broad; but he maintains that this extension of length and breadth is not the extension of the figure called visible, but of the tangible figure; that the only figure which does seem to us combined in vision with colour, is that which philosophers call tangible. And, in reply to the argument, or the supposed argument, in support of the notion that extension constitutes an ingredient in our original perceptions of sight, derived from the fact, that there is a certain figure, or length and breadth of the retina, upon which the light falls, he says, "this is admitted; but the question is not whether such a figure exists, but whether the perception of the figure necessarily forms a part of the sensation. A certain extent of nervous expanse is affected when sensation, through the medium of the other senses, is excited; of the olfactory nerves, for instance. We do not, however, connect extension with our sensations of smell on this account; we have not yards or inches of fragrance. Why then should extension, for this reason, accompany the sensation of colour?"

The reader will form his own judgment upon this difficult question. I feel scarcely prepared to express an opinion. Some things it seems necessary to concede to Dr. Brown. In the first place, that our present inability to separate extension from colour—or, in other words, that the fact that objects now appear to us long and broad—does not prove that it was originally so; because they now appear at

different distances from us, though it has been proved that they seemed originally in contact with the eye. Our perception of extension, therefore, *may* be acquired. Secondly, it must, I imagine, be conceded to Dr. Brown, and for the reasons assigned by him, that the perception of extension is not necessarily involved in our original sensations of sight because a certain expanse of the retina is acted upon when vision is produced. But I am constrained to acknowledge, that he appears to me to involve the subject in some perplexity, by supposing, as he does, that there can be no visible figure of objects, unless the figure on the retina is perceived. Now I certainly am not aware that any philosopher conceives that the visible figure which, as he imagines, bodies present to the eye, is *the figure which they form upon the retina.* If that were the case, how could bodies appear larger than the retina? The question is, whether colour, when first perceived by the eye, is not seen to be expanded—to be long and broad—or of a certain *figure*—a *figure* of larger or smaller dimensions, according to the extent of the retina affected, but not the very figure formed upon it? And, further, whether this figure, or apparent magnitude, does not become, by association, a sign of the real or tangible magnitude of bodies? It is essential to the support of Dr. Brown's system to maintain, as he does, that the figure or magnitude, which he allows it is now impossible to separate from colour, is the tangible, *i.e.* the real figure or magnitude. I cannot, however, but doubt the accuracy of this statement. The pane of glass in the window, near to which I sit, appears thousands of times longer and broader than another pane, of the same size, in the opposite house; yea, abundantly larger than the

house itself. Is the apparent magnitude of the latter the tangible magnitude? How can it be supposed? Further, if the figure which we cannot separate from colour, be the tangible figure; *i.e.* a figure including the dimensions of length, breadth, and thickness; how would it be possible to represent it upon a flat surface? If objects really appear thick, as well as broad and long, which Dr. Brown supposes, it would seem to me to follow, that we cannot form pictures of them, because thickness cannot be drawn upon canvas. If, on the contrary, all that we really see be certain kinds and shades of colour, of different degrees of length and breadth; and if the thickness or solidity of bodies be a mere suggestion of memory; then the mystery of the art of painting is unravelled. The same proportionate length, and breadth, and kinds, and shades, of colour, appearing on paper, or canvas, will suggest all that the scene in nature, which it represents, will suggest—and a painting may be mistaken for an actual landscape. Lastly, if no extension of length and breadth, varying according to the distances of objects, is involved in the original sensations of sight, how could the appearance which bodies make to the eye, ever come, by experience, to suggest their real magnitude? The brightness, and degradation, and variation in the colour of objects, at different distances from the eye, afford a basis on which experience may erect rules to guide us in judging of distances. But if there were no visible extension of length and breadth, I am at a loss to conceive how we could ever come to judge of their real size. On the contrary, if they have apparent magnitude, varying, let it be observed, according to their distances, and not remaining the same, as Dr. Brown represents, at all distances, (and that they

have, we have surely only to open our eyes to be convinced,) all difficulty is at once removed. The apparent size suggests by experience the real size; in the same way as difference of colour suggests difference of distance.

There is one statement by Dr. Brown on this subject, which appears to me at variance with his own sentiments. "The magnitude," he says, "which we connect with colour, in any case, is the magnitude which we term tangible,—a magnitude," he adds, "that does not depend on the diameter of the retina, *but is variously, greater or less, depending only on the magnitude and distance of the external object.*"* Now as the tangible, *i. e.* the real magnitude of bodies is incapable of change—as it does not depend upon, or vary with, their distance, I am unable to attach any meaning to these words; unless one which recognizes the very distinction which he endeavours to disprove.

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## DIVISION II.

*INCLUDING THE INTERNAL AFFECTIONS OF THE MIND.*

THE class of feelings which have passed under our review, are the result of the laws both of matter and of mind. They necessarily suppose that, in the latter, there exist certain susceptibilities of receiving impressions from without; and that there are, in the former, certain properties, or qualities, adapted to develop them. The external affections then depend,

* Vol. II. p. 89.

as Dr. Brown has well said, as much upon external things as upon the mind itself. They require for their existence the presence and influence of something external to the mind—a circumstance which explains, and perhaps sufficiently justifies, the term by which this incomparable writer has designated them.

The class of affections we now proceed to consider, comprehends those which depend upon the independent constitution of the mind itself; which do not *directly*, at least, depend upon the body; which have for their immediate antecedents, not impressions made upon the organs of sense, or the brain, but previous feelings or states of the mind itself. Before we proceed to classify these affections, it may be of use to offer a few remarks in proof of their existence, and in illustration of their vast importance.

It may be desirable to shew, in *the first place*, that we have such affections; for, in consequence of prevailing misconceptions of the meaning of such terms as causation, mental action, &c., a difficulty is apt to be experienced, in conceiving that one state, or affection of mind, can be immediately followed, without the interposition of any other agency, by another state, or affection of mind. How can a state of mind, in which the mind is said to be passive, become the cause of some other state? How can mind thus act upon itself? To some, this appears to involve greater difficulty than the connexion between matter and mind. In the latter case, the statement of preceding philosophers, incredible as it may appear, has seemed to them to lessen the difficulty. An impression, such is the statement, is made upon an organ of sense—the mind, which is gifted with active power, attends to the impression—and so becomes sensible of the presence of something

external; somewhat in the same way, we presume, as we are apprized of the presence of a beggar when he knocks at the door! It is wonderful that such learned trifling should, for so long a period, have been mistaken for sound philosophy!

It is difficult to see how these notions can be applied to the rise of our internal affections. One of these affections cannot knock, so to speak, at the door of the mind, and so arouse its slumbering attention; or if it did, it could only, we should think, direct its attention to itself, and not awaken a totally different affection. It is impossible for the old philosophy to explain how one affection of the mind produces another affection. But if we entertain those notions of causation—of mental or material action, which have been advocated in the preceding part of this work, we shall not think that there is any thing peculiarly mysterious in the matter. All we know of the external affections is, that a certain state of mind invariably follows a certain state of matter; all we know of the internal affections is, that a certain state of mind is subsequent to another state of mind. The amount of our knowledge is, in each case, the same; it is the fact, and the fact exclusively. That the consequent follows the antecedent, in both cases, must be resolved into Divine appointment. Now it is surely as easy to conceive that the constitution of the mind is such that one state of mind should be connected with another state of mind, as that a certain mental affection should, in like manner, be connected with a certain impression upon the body—a substance that is external to itself, and radically different from it.

There is, then, no *à priori* objection against the supposition that we have internal (in the sense in which the word has been explained) as well as

external affections; or, in other words, that such is the constitution of the mind, that some of its affections immediately and invariably precede, and so are, in the only intelligible sense of the words, the causes of other affections. The Divine Contriver of our mental frame, to adopt the language of Dr. Brown, with a slight variation, who formed the soul to exist in certain states, on the presence of external things, could also easily form it to exist in certain successive states without the presence, or direct influence of any thing external; the one state of the mind being as immediately the cause of the state of mind which follows it, as, in our external feelings, the change produced in our corporeal organ of sense, is the cause of any one of the particular affections of that class.*

All this, however, does not prove that we *have* such affections. Certainly not; but is the existence of such a class of affections to be doubted? Does not the sensation of hunger produce a desire of food? Does not the perception of danger excite fear? Does not the sight of a friend awaken joy? Dr. Brown has illustrated this subject in a manner so felicitous—so admirably adapted to fix an indelible impression upon the mind, of the sentiments he aims to convey, that though the passage is long, I shall easily be excused for quoting it. "Suppose ourselves, in walking across a lawn, to turn our eyes to a particular point, and to perceive there an oak. That is to say, the presence of the oak, or rather of the light reflected from it, occasions a certain new state of mind, which we call a sensation of vision; an affection which belongs to the mind alone, indeed, but of which we have every reason to suppose, that the mind of itself, without the presence of light, would not have been the subject.

* Vol. II. pp. 153-4.

The peculiar sensation, therefore, is the result of the presence of the light reflected from the oak; and we perceive it, because the mind is capable of being affected by external things. But this affection of the mind, which has an external object for its immediate cause, is not the only mental change which takes place. Other changes succeed it, without any other *external* impression. We *compare* the oak with some other tree which we have seen before, and are struck with its superior magnificence and beauty; we *imagine* how some scene more familiar to us would appear, if it were adorned with this tree, and how the scene before us would appear if it were stripped of it; we think of the number of years which must have passed since the oak was an acorn; and we moralize, perhaps, on the changes which have taken place in the little history of ourselves and our friends, and still more on the revolutions of kingdoms, and the birth and decay of a whole generation of mankind,—while *it* has been silently and regularly advancing to maturity through the sunshine and the storm. Of all the *variety of states of mind* which these processes of thought involve, the only one which can be ascribed to an external object as its direct cause, is the *primary perception of the oak;* the rest have been the result, not immediately of any thing external, but of preceding *states* of the mind; that particular mental state which constituted the perception of the oak, being followed immediately by that different state which constituted the comparison of the two; and so, successively, through all the different processes of thought enumerated. The mind, indeed, could not, without the presence of the oak, that is to say, without the presence of the light which the oak reflects, have existed in the state which constituted the perception of the oak. But as little could

any *external object*, without this primary mental affection, have produced *immediately* any of those other states of the mind which *followed* the perception. There is thus one obvious distinction of the mental phænomena; as in relation to their causes, external or internal; and whatever other terms of subdivision it may be necessary to employ, we have, at least, one boundary, and know what it is we mean, when we speak of the external and internal affections of the mind."*

In *the second place*, it will be proper to illustrate their vast importance. The susceptibilities which are indicated by them, enlarge, to an incredible degree, our capacities of enjoyment. All our bodily senses, indeed, are inlets of pleasure. They may doubtless become sources of pain: but they were not given to afflict and torment us. The benevolent intention of the heavenly donor is apparent. The loss of any single sense, would be the drying up of a source of boundless gratification. But the affections, upon the consideration of which we are now to enter, are peculiarly valuable in this point of view, on account of their immense number; since by far the greater part of our feelings are those which arise from our internal successions of thought. Innumerable as our perceptions appear, they form but an inconsiderable part of the varied consciousness of a day. A single sensation may originate a countless train of feelings, each of them more precious to the mind through which they pass in rapid succession, than the wealth of the Indies. An impression made upon one of the bodily organs, may lead us back to the scenes of childhood and youth—may cause us to live over again, so to speak, the hours of

* Vol. I. pp. 368—370.

enjoyment we have spent in days which have long since passed away—and awaken the most delightful anticipations of that futurity into which nothing but the eye of fancy, and imagination, and faith, is permitted to enter. And if, in the backward vision of events, scenes should start into view which distress, rather than delight us, let us not forget that this is not to be ascribed to the constitution of our minds, but to that sad proneness to evil which carried us from the path of duty, and so forces bitterness out of the source of consolation itself.

Further, our susceptibilities of internal affection elevate us greatly in the scale of being. To them we are indebted for our superiority over the irrational creation. In all that regards mere sensation, we are certainly not raised above brutes, and are, indeed, in some respects, unquestionably inferior to them. Destitute of the class of internal affections, we should be mere brutes, or rather more depressed in the scale of being; for, limited as their powers are, they have manifestly more than mere sensation. They have memory, if not judgment, in an inferior and a stationary degree. We must, then, seek for that cause which elevates the mind of man, physically considered, to a nearer equality with angelic nature, than the mind of the brute sustains, in those high and noble faculties which constitute, according to our arrangement, the second general division of its powers. To raise our estimate of the value of these powers, let us endeavour to form a conception of the state to which we should be reduced were we to be deprived of memory, and the power of marking resemblances, &c. In that case all science would become extinct; for science, as we had occasion formerly to observe, consists in classification, which requires a power of recognizing

resemblances. Our existence would, in fact, be confined to the present moment. Our minds would resemble a mirror, as Dr. Brown observes, from which the images of passing objects perish as they are hurried forwards by others,—with this difference only, that the mind would be conscious of the presence of the image while it remained, which the mirror is not. But, constituted as we are at present, the knowledge which we acquire from without, lives within us; and, in the very darkness of midnight, can create again, so to speak, that very world which is hidden from our view. Our internal affections enable us to live in the past and the future, and render those objects which are to form and discipline our minds, and prepare them for a higher sphere of duty and of enjoyment, *for ever present with us.* They serve to weave, so to speak, all our thoughts and feelings into one harmonious whole. "If," says Dr. Brown, "we had the power of external sense only, life would be as passive as the most unconnected dream; or rather, far more passive and irregular than the wildest of our dreams. Our remembrances, comparisons, our hopes, our fears, and all the variety of our thoughts and emotions, give a harmony and unity to our general consciousness, which make the consciousness of each day a little drama, or a connected part of that still greater drama, which is to end only with the death of its hero, or rather with the commencement of his glorious apotheosis."*

Finally, our susceptibilities of internal affection, render the mind independent of the body. Against the doctrine of a separate state, between death and the resurrection—a doctrine maintained by all orthodox divines—materialists and infidels have been in the

* Vol. II. p. 156.

habit of objecting, that the mind cannot exist without the body,—that it is so dependent upon bodily organization, in relation to all its feelings and operations, that it must necessarily sink into a state of unconsciousness, or rather of non-existence, when the body crumbles into the dust. Now, holding fast as I do, the scriptural sentiment, that " to be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord," I am still disposed to concede to the materialist, that of all that class of feelings which we have denominated sensations, *i, e.* of the sensitive, or external affections, the mind must be deprived by the loss of the body. I am well aware, that an Omnipotent Being could give existence to a creature, susceptible of all the affections which now arise, in the mind of man, without the slightest connexion with any thing material. On the death of the body he may, it will be said, impart this susceptibility; and I have no intention to affirm with certainty that he will not do it; but the supposition appears to me in the highest degree improbable. The bestowment of this supposed susceptibility, would involve a radical change in the physical nature of the human mind; and such a change the Scriptures, I think, do not warrant us to expect. Were it to take place, it would render unnecessary, if not undesirable, the redemption of the body from the grave. Now the Sacred Writers invariably represent this event as the very consummation of the Christian's enjoyment. Their statements necessarily imply that the soul suffers loss while the body remains a prisoner in the grave. And this loss is, I apprehend, the loss of that entire class of affections, which have come under our review—those feelings of mind of which the senses are the inlets—and which, as we have seen, cannot, in the present state, be experienced, without that impression

upon the external organ, with which the resulting sensation has been connected, by the great Author of our frame, in invariable sequence. It is not judicious, I imagine, to contend that the mind will continue to experience, in a separate state, all the feelings of which it is the subject in this world. The independence of the mind upon the body should be sought for in that class of feelings which have nothing external and material as their cause.

The bearing of these remarks upon the fashionable system of phrenology will be apparent. According to that system, all our affections are external affections. They depend upon a certain state of the body; they must accordingly perish with the body. "If the mind," says Dr. Brown, in a passage to which I would call the particular attention of all who seem to have no apprehension that phrenology will ultimately conduct to materialism, "were capable of no affections, but those which I have termed external, it would itself be virtually as mortal as all the mortal things that are around it; since, but for them, as causes of its feelings, it could not, in these circumstances of complete dependance, have any feelings whatever, and could, therefore, exist only in that state of original insensibility, which preceded the first sensation that gave it consciousness of existence. It is, in the true sense of immortality of life, immortal, only because it depends for its feelings, as well as for its mere existence, not on the state of perishable things, which are but the atmosphere that floats around it, but on its own independent laws; or, at least,—for the laws of mind, as well as the laws of matter, can mean nothing more,—depends, for the successions of its feelings, only on the provident arrangements of that all-foreseeing Power, whose will,

as it existed at the very moment at which it called every thing from nothing, and gave to mind and matter their powers and susceptibilities, is thus, consequently, in the whole series of effects, from age to age, the eternal legislation of the universe."*

The internal affections, like the affections of sense, are to be analyzed, and classified; and there is more room for analysis in the case of this order of our affections, than in that of those which have already come under our notice. Our primitive sensations cannot be analyzed; they are perfectly simple feelings. We are in danger of confounding them, indeed, with states of mind, compounded of the original and simple feeling, and a certain notion, with which it has become blended, by intimate association; and hence there is a necessity for a process of analysis even here. But it is in the class of internal affections especially that

* Vol. II. p. 155.

A sense of duty has led me to make the above remark in reference to the system alluded to; but I have no wish, for the following reasons, to enrol myself among the number of its decided and avowed opponents. First, because it reckons among its advocates the biographer of Dr. Brown, a gentleman of great metaphysical acumen, whose opinions on any subject are entitled to much respect, and especially upon a subject to which he has probably devoted a considerably greater degree of attention than any of his opponents. Secondly, because I am, perhaps, properly speaking, rather an *unbeliever* of the doctrine than a *rejecter* of it: and, Thirdly, because candour compels me to say that I have been repelled from so careful an examination of the system as I might have given to it, by what I cannot but regard as the vague and unsatisfactory manner in which it is exhibited in the writings of one of its principal advocates. Poor phrenology has been very unfortunate in its apostle! Could not the Modern Athens supply his place with one who could at any rate state the principles of the system with something like philosophical precision? I am constrained to think that the present leader had better beware of metaphysics.

feelings, bound together in indissoluble union, are in the greatest danger of being mistaken for simple states of mind; and it is consequently here that we have the greatest need to institute a rigid process of mental analysis.

In prosecuting our analysis, we shall find need to summon all our caution and judgment to our aid. We may err in attempting to carry the analysis too far,—an error which will lead us to aim at forcing into one division, intellectual diversities which cannot be made to correspond. Or we may err, on the other hand, by not carrying the analysis far enough—an error which will cause us to multiply divisions, in classifying the phænomena, without necessity.

The metaphysicians on the continent have fallen into the former mistake. In France, Dr. Brown tells us, all the phænomena of mind, have been, during half a century, regarded as sensations, or transformed sensations; that is to say, as sensations variously simplified, or combined. The system of Condillac supposes not merely that sensation is the source of all our feelings, in the sense of being primary to them, but that it essentially constitutes them all, "in the same manner as the waters of the fountain are afterwards the very same waters which flow along the mead." When two material substances chemically combine, and seem to form a third substance, unlike either of the former, this third substance, how dissimilar soever it may appear, is only the two substances co-existing. Condillac suffers this fact to guide his views in intellectual science. Two affections of mind are followed by a third;—the *perception* of a horse, and the *perception* of a cow, by the *conception* of their resemblance, for instance; and, therefore, this third affection—the conception, or feeling of

their resemblance—is the two former affections, as Condillac imagines, co-existing or transformed. In a most masterly manner, Dr. Brown has shewn, that the analogy which has misled Condillac is delusive; as, indeed, the greater part of such analogies must necessarily be. He exhibits the radical error committed by him—the error of supposing that when he has shewn the circumstances in which any mental affection arises, he has shewn this affection to be essentially the same with the circumstances which produced it. He states very justly, that, if we refer the decision to consciousness, we must at once admit that the feeling of resemblance, in the case referred to above, is essentially different from the previous acts of perception which originated it; and he adds, "It is not, therefore, as being susceptible of mere sensation, but as being susceptible of more than mere sensation, *that the mind is able to compare its sensations with one another.*" This act of comparison, if we call it a mental act, requires, for its performance, a distinct and separate power.

In addition to Dr. Brown's able argument, the case of brutes may be appealed to, in support of the preceding statement. They have sensation, and in all that regards mere sensation, they are, as we have seen, probably not less perfect, at any rate, than man. They ought, therefore, according to the French system, to be able to perceive resemblances, and so to classify; that is, they ought to be as capable of science as man himself. This, however, as we are well aware, is contrary to fact. The internal affections cannot then be resolved into sensation.

Some of the Scotch metaphysicians appear to have fallen into the opposite error. They have multiplied powers to an unprecedented degree; and against this

error, as it appears to me, we ought to be especially on our guard. We may stop the process of analysis too soon, that is, before we have arrived at the elements of our varied thoughts and feelings; but we cannot carry the process too far, if we pause when we reach the elements themselves. It is conceded at once, indeed, that—since intellectual elements do not, any more than material elements, exhibit in themselves any distinguishing marks that they are such—we may at times waste our labour on that which does not admit of further decomposition. But how are we to know that it will admit of no further decomposition, till we make an attempt to analyze, and make it without success? Who complains of excessive analysis in physical science? The case of the ancients, who admitted of only four elements, and the case of the alchymists, who contended that there is but one—to both of which Dr. Brown refers,—are not in point; because their statements proceeded not on the ground of examination, and analysis, but of conjecture merely. Let us not, in like manner, complain of intellectual analysis, to what extent soever it may be carried, while the results of that analysis are carefully examined. It becomes us to guard, I apprehend, against excessive simplification in the science of mind, not by refusing, as Dr. Reid and Mr. Stewart have done, to put our feelings and states of mind generally into the intellectual crucible, but by resolving not to be imposed upon by any thing which it may be pretended comes out of it. We do not bar the attempts of the chemist to reduce the present number of apparent material elements;—on the contrary, we applaud them. He is engaged in his proper vocation. We merely deem it necessary to exercise suitable caution in receiving the announced results of his experiments. If he assure

us that water may be resolved into certain gases, we pause, perhaps, in forming a judgment till some one has repeated the experiment on which he grounds his opinion, or we repeat it ourselves: and when a sufficient trial has been made, we give our confidence and support to the new doctrine. And even if this second attempt at analysis should fail to bring satisfaction to our minds—if it should furnish reason to suppose that the original experimenter was mistaken—we should not censure the efforts he had made to unfold the secrets of the material world, unless it appeared, on examination, that those efforts had been unwisely or ignorantly directed.

Similar remarks, as it appears to me, may be made with regard to the analysis of mind, its powers, and operations. No discoveries will be made in intellectual science, if no discoveries are expected and attempted—if nearly the whole of the mental phænomena are at once, with little or no examination, to be regarded as the results of intuition, or of certain original powers, concerning which nothing further can be said, than that they are primitive laws of mind. Speculation and analysis should, it is conceived, be encouraged; but we ought to receive their pretended results with great caution. If the French metaphysicians, for example, declare that all our feelings may be resolved into sensations, let us appeal to consciousness. Let us examine, by its aid, whether the affection, which, as they assure us, is compound, does really involve the elements of which they speak; whether these elements united, constitute the whole of the feeling, or more than the feeling; and let the testimony which consciousness gives upon the subject, guide our decision.

In the present state of mental science, few, it is

imagined, will be disposed to deny that, perhaps, the chief fault of Dr. Reid's generally excellent writings, is the disregard of analysis which they display. This distinguished writer has multiplied powers to a most unnecessary and unwarrantable extent; "for though," as Dr. Brown has well observed, "in one sense, the susceptibilities or powers which the mind possesses, may be said to be as numerous as its feelings themselves—there being no classes of feelings in the mind, and every feeling implying a corresponding susceptibility; yet when we arrange these different phænomena, in certain classes, it is an error in classification, to give a new name to varieties that can be referred to other parts of the division already made."

In our classification of the internal affections, we follow Dr. Brown, who divides them into two great orders, "our intellectual states of mind, and our emotions;" and, uniting with them the order of feelings we have already considered, he thus admirably exhibits the distinction which exists between them. "We have sensations, or perceptions of the objects that affect our bodily organs; these I term *the sensitive, or external affections of the mind;* we remember objects—we imagine them in new situations—we compare their relations;—these mere conceptions, or notions of objects and their qualities, as elements of our general knowledge, are what I have termed *the intellectual states of the mind;*—we are moved with certain lively feelings, on the consideration of what we thus perceive, remember, imagine, or compare—with feelings, for example, of beauty, or sublimity, or astonishment, or love, or hate, or hope, or fear; these, and various other vivid feelings analogous to them, *are our emotions.*"

"There is no portion of our consciousness," he adds,

"which does not appear to me to be included in one or other of these three divisions. To know all our sensitive states, all our intellectual states, and all our emotions, is to know all the states or phænomena of the mind."* In reference to this division of the internal affections, I agree with Mr. Welsh, in thinking that no advances in science can supersede it. "Intellectual states and emotions are felt by us to be generically different, and must always thus be felt."

## Order I.

### Of our internal affections, comprehending our intellectual states of mind.

The mental affections thus designated, divide themselves into two classes, which it may be proper to illustrate briefly, before we proceed to a particular consideration of each.

It is impossible to examine the mental phænomena without perceiving that there are laws by which their succession is regulated. No one can doubt that there is what we call a train of ideas in the mind—that one thought originates another thought, which, in its turn, introduces a third; so that a line of connexion runs through the consciousness of each day, and, indeed, through the whole consciousness of life. The first class of intellectual states of mind, consists then of those simple notions or conceptions of objects, which separately arise out of a preceding state of mind, under the guidance of laws to be afterwards considered.

It is not more certain, however, that one simple

* Vol. I. p. 377.

conception thus introduces another, than that notions of relation arise in the mind, when two or more objects are present to its view. The mind as irresistibly *compares* the beings and things to which its attention is invited, as it perceives them; and it must be particularly observed, that those notions of relation which arise out of this mental comparison of two objects, differ essentially from the thoughts which are suggested by the contemplation of one object; and so constitute the second class of our intellectual states of mind. To the first of these classes, Dr. Brown has given the name of Simple Suggestions; the second, he distinguishes by the title Relative Suggestions. These two classes of mental affections, let it be further observed, indicate the existence of two distinct powers or tendencies of mind; and it is only necessary to suppose that the mind is actually possessed of these two powers, to account for the existence of the whole of that order of our mental affections which we are now to consider.

I do not altogether approve of the terms by which Dr. Brown designates these two classes of our intellectual states, especially of the latter. To the word Suggestion, an unusual latitude of signification is attached. When the sight of a painting is followed by the conception of the painter, it is in perfect harmony with the ordinary use of the term, to say it suggests the latter idea; but the perception of a horse, and a sheep, can scarcely be said to suggest the points in which they agree. Dr. Brown, however, uses the term Suggest in this connexion, merely to intimate that one state of mind immediately follows another state. Relative Suggestions are feelings which arise by a law of the mind, from the co-existing perception, or conception, of two or more objects. Bearing these

remarks in mind, we need not hesitate to adopt Dr. Brown's phraseology; and, for reasons formerly stated, it is deemed better not to depart from it.

## Class I.

### *Of the Intellectual States, &c. viz. Simple Suggestions,*

Are those states of mind which arise out of preceding states of mind, without involving any notion of relation; or, in other words, they are simple conceptions of what has been formerly perceived. The sight of a river, for instance, suggests the idea of a friend who perished in it many years ago. In this case the recollection of our friend, which is one state of mind, is introduced by the perception of the river, which constituted the immediately preceding state of mind. And in explanation of the fact that the latter state arises out of the former, no other reason can be assigned, than that God has so formed the mind that certain states are subsequent to certain other states, according to various laws, of the nature and operations of which we must derive our knowledge from experience. In illustration of this class of our mental states, Mr. Stewart says,—"That one thought is often suggested to the mind by another; and that the sight of an external object often recalls former occurrences, and revives former feelings, are facts which are perfectly familiar, even to those who are least disposed to speculate concerning the principles of their nature. In passing along a road which we have formerly travelled, in the company of a friend, the particulars of the conversation in which we were then engaged, are frequently suggested to us by the objects we meet with. In such a scene, we recollect that a particular subject was started; and, in passing the different

houses, and plantations, and rivers, the arguments we were discussing when we last saw them, recur spontaneously to the memory."*

To the thoughts which are thus suggested, we give the name of Simple Suggestions; the mental power, in consequence of the existence of which they arise in the manner described by Mr. Stewart, we denominate Simple Suggestion. It will be necessary here to exhibit more fully the nature of the power itself; and then to explain the laws by which it operates.

The phrase, "the association of ideas," was formerly used to designate what is meant by simple suggestion. Dr. Reid, indeed, thinks it has no claim to be considered an original principle, or an ultimate fact in our nature, and resolves it into habit. Mr. Stewart, on the contrary, resolves habit, when the term is used in reference to mental operations, into association of ideas, which he regards as a law of our constitution, or an original principle. The following reasons lead me to reject the phrase, "association of ideas," as a proper designation of that power, to the influence of which the mental states we are now considering ought to be traced.

*First,* it is too limited in its application. It supposes that nothing but past *thoughts* can be recalled, whereas it is manifest, such at least is the general opinion of philosophers, that former *feelings* are most powerfully revived by the presence of objects, the perception of which co-existed with the feelings themselves. Which of us could revisit the chamber in which we witnessed the dying agonies of a beloved friend, without a renewal of our grief? Indeed, Mr. Stewart himself admits that the phrase is not unexceptionable.

* Vol. I. pp. 277-8.

"If it be used," is his language, "as it frequently has been, to comprehend those laws by which the succession of all our thoughts, and of all our mental operations, is regulated, the word *idea* must be understood in a sense much more extensive than it is commonly employed in." "I would not, therefore," he adds, "be understood to dispute the advantages which might be derived from the introduction of a new phrase, more precise, and more applicable to the fact."*

*Secondly*, it assumes what is not true; *viz.* that the ideas which suggest each other must, at some previous period, have been present together to the mind, and become united, by some process which is not explained, in indissoluble bonds. Suggestion is the result, it is imagined, of association. One idea brings another into the mind, in a manner somewhat similar to that, we presume, in which the last of the chain-shot invariably follows, when the first in the train effects an entrance.

Now the whole of this statement is contradicted by consciousness and fact. We see two objects, it may be, at the same time; we are conscious that we perceive them simultaneously; but we are not conscious of any bond of union being thrown around them, which should render a simultaneous conception of them, in all future time, necessary. And, in point of fact, some ideas often suggest others, which have never co-existed previously in the same mind. We have most of us seen a giant; we may also have seen a dwarf; that is, not simultaneously, but at different periods. And yet, in all probability, the sight of one would instantly suggest the idea of the other. This

* Vol. I. pp. 283-4.

instance, referred to by Dr. Brown, affords most decided proof that suggestion is not the result of association, but that it must be referred to some other principle.

*Thirdly*, it mistakes a particular rule, according to which ideas are suggested, for the *cause* of their suggestion. It it doubtless true, that when two objects have been perceived simultaneously, the thought of one may be afterwards suggested to the mind by the presence of the other; but the ultimate *reason* of the suggestion is, that the great Creator of the mind has imparted to it a tendency to exist in certain states of thought and feeling, after certain other states of thought and feeling; or, in other words, he has imparted to one thought or feeling, an aptitude to produce a certain other thought or feeling. This tendency to exist in certain states, after certain other states, is the great general law of the mind, as it relates to the power of suggestion. The conception of a giant, awakening the conception of a dwarf—the thought of a river, bringing to our view the friend who perished in his attempt to cross it—are individual cases of development of this great law. They afford an illustration of two of the rules,—the rule of contrast, and of contiguity,—according to which the suggesting principle acts; but they do not exhibit the cause of the suggestion. It is not more true, in the latter instance, than it can be in the former, that the conception of one of the objects referred to, suggests the other, *because the two ideas have been formerly associated*. The suggestion takes place in both instances, because there is an original tendency in the mind to exist in certain states after certain other states—a tendency which operates according to certain rules, within the circle and influence of which, both

the cases of suggestion, of which we are now speaking, are found. The general law is not that ideas which had been formerly associated will suggest one another, *and for that reason; but that there is a tendency in the mind to the suggestion of* RELATIVE CONCEPTIONS; the giant, accordingly, suggests the dwarf, and the river the death of our friend, because, in the former instance, the two ideas sustain the relation of contrast, and, in the latter, the relation of contiguity to each other.

The tendency to which we now refer, is apt to be regarded as mysterious and wonderful; but, in fact, it is not more wonderful, that the mind should be formed to exist in relative states, after relative states—or that one conception should introduce another, in some way related to it—than that it should be so constituted, as to experience the sensation of vision when the rays of light fall upon the retina. However inexplicable the former process may be, it is not more inexplicable than the other. "It is as little necessary," says Dr. Brown, "to the suggestion, that there should be any prior union or association of ideas, as to vision, that there should be any mysterious connexion of the organ with light, at some prior period to that in which light itself first acted on the organ, and the visual sensation was its consequence. As soon as the presence of the rays of light at the retina has produced a certain affection of the sensorium, in that very moment the mind begins to exist in the state which constitutes the sensation of colour;—as soon as a certain perception or conception has arisen, the mind begins to exist in the state which constitutes what is said to be some associate conception. Any prior connexion, or association, is as little necessary in the one of these cases as in the other. All that is prior is

not any process connecting light with the organ, or the conception of a giant with the conception of a dwarf, but only certain original susceptibilities of the mind, by which it is formed, to have, in the one case, some one of the sensations of vision when light is at the retina—in the other case, to have, in certain circumstances, the conception of a dwarf, as immediately consecutive to that of a giant."*

The reader must be on his guard against supposing that the discussion to which his attention has been called, is a mere dispute in regard to the best name by which to designate a certain power of mind. It supposes, on the contrary, that the disputants entertain different views of the nature of the mind. There is obviously a broad line of distinction between that philosophy, which maintains that no ideas can suggest each other which have not been previously associated in the manner so frequently referred to,—and a system which affirms, on the other hand, that the suggestion is the result of a native susceptibility of mind,—of an original tendency (to refer to one instance in illustration) to exist in that state which we call the conception of a giant, after it has existed in that other state, which we call the conception of a dwarf. In this instance, it is impossible that the suggestion should be the result of previous association, since the very first time that the dwarf is perceived, after we have become aware of the existence of such a being as a giant, the conception of the latter will be awakened. And, in cases where two ideas had previously co-existed, it is absurd to attempt to explain the fact that one suggests the other, by the supposition that some union was formed between them; since that would be to explain one mystery by the introduction of another,—

* Vol. II. pp. 344-5.

a mode of explanation which has unfortunately been too common in mental science.

This faculty of suggestion is one of the most valuable of the mental powers; the possession of it demands the most fervent gratitude to that Great Being who has so richly and mysteriously endowed the human mind. It is the revealer to us of the past; it enables us to look into the future. We are ready to imagine, as Dr. Brown justly observes, "that the future *memory* of perception is involved in perception itself,"—that the mind could not, that is, exist without the remembrance of pleasures formerly enjoyed, or of sorrows long past and long endured. But we deceive ourselves here. The faculty of suggestion is not essential to the *existence* of the mind, how much soever it may be to its *comfort*. And without the power of suggestion we should be destitute of memory; for memory, as we shall presently see, *is* suggestion; it is thought, springing up after thought, in the retrospect of former events,—carrying us back, in imagination, to the scenes which it so vividly revives, exciting a feeble reminiscence of the emotions which those scenes themselves awakened,—and thus causing us to live over again the whole of our past lives. How precious a gift is this, and how mysterious! A power to look back upon the past, would appear to us almost as wonderful as an ability to look forwards into the future, were it not that wonder is prevented by its actual possession. "When a feeling," says Dr. Brown, "of the existence of which consciousness furnishes the only evidence, has passed away so *completely*, that not even the slightest consciousness of it remains, it would surely, but for this experience," or possession, "be more natural to conclude that it had perished altogether, than that it should, at the

distance of many years, without any renewal of it, by the external cause which originally produced it, again *start*, as it were, of *itself*, into being. To *foresee* that which has not yet begun to exist, is, in itself, scarcely more unaccountable, than to see, as it were, before us what has wholly ceased to exist. The present moment is all of which we are conscious, and which can strictly be said to have a real existence, in relation to ourselves. That mode of time which we call the past, and that other mode of time which we call the future, are both equally unexisting; that the knowledge of either should be added to us"—the knowledge of the future, through the medium of the past—" so as to form a part of our present consciousness, is a gift of heaven, most beneficial to us, indeed, but most mysterious; and equally, or nearly equally mysterious, whether the unexisting time, of which the knowledge is indulged to us, be the future, or the past."*

The faculty of suggestion, then, is an original tendency which the Creator of the mind has given to it, to exist in certain states, after certain other states. It revives our emotions, as well as our ideas; though we now consider its influence only as it is concerned in the introduction of the latter. Such, at least, is the doctrine both of Mr. Stewart and of Dr. Brown. I would beg to propose it as a question, worthy of consideration, whether the power of suggestion does, in any instance, *directly* revive our emotions. We recollect, indeed, the dying pangs of a beloved friend with renewed grief. But the faculty of suggestion carries us back, so to speak, into the very chamber; it places the whole scene again before us: it revives

* Vol. II. p. 204.

that is, our former perceptions, or ideas;—may it not thus only indirectly revive our former emotions?

But though the mind is so constituted as that certain states follow other states, this succession does not take place loosely and confusedly. "*Any* feeling does not follow *any* feeling." There is a certain fixed and regular order of sequence, ascertainable by experience, and by experience alone. And the business of the mental philosopher is to observe this order, and to reduce the particular cases of suggestion, to general laws or tendencies of suggestion; which general laws, it is, however, most carefully to be observed, are not to be regarded as the causes of suggestion, but as descriptions of the usual manner in which the power of suggestion operates.

The importance of this fact with reference to suggestion is great. "If past objects and events had been suggested to us again, not in that series in which they had formerly occurred, but in endless confusion and irregularity, the knowledge thus acquired, however gratifying as a source of mere variety of feeling, would avail us little, or rather would be wholly profitless, not merely in our speculative inquiries as philosophers, but in the simplest actions of common life. It is quite evident that, in this case, we should be altogether unable to turn our experience to account, as a mode of avoiding future evil, or obtaining future good; because, for this application of our knowledge, it would be requisite that events, before observed, should occur to us at the time when similar events might be expected. We refrain from tasting the poisonous berry, which we have known to be the occasion of death to him who tasted it; because the mere sight of it brings again before us the fatal event which we have heard or witnessed. We satisfy our appetite

with a salutary fruit, without the slightest apprehension; because its familiar appearance recalls to us the refreshment which we have repeatedly received. But if these suggestions were reversed,—if the agreeable images of health and refreshment were all that were suggested by the poisonous plant, and pain, and convulsions, and death were the only images suggested by the sight of the grateful and nourishing fruit,—there can be no doubt to which of the two our unfortunate preference would be given."*

In suggestion, there is a tendency, as we have seen, to relative conceptions; so that all objects and ideas, which sustain any relation to each other, are capable of suggesting one another. To inquire, therefore, into the laws, according to which the suggesting principle operates, is, in effect, to inquire what relations are to be found existing amongst our multiplied thoughts and conceptions; or to endeavour to reduce them all, as several writers have done, to a few general and comprehensive classes. Mr. Stewart makes no attempt to do this, and for a reason which is not altogether destitute of weight. In reference to Hume's classification, he says, "It is not necessary for my present purpose that I should enter into a critical examination of this part of his system, or that I should attempt to specify those principles of association which he has omitted. Indeed, it does not seem to me that the problem admits of a satisfactory solution, for there is no possible relation among the objects of our knowledge, which may not serve to connect them together in the mind; and, therefore, although one enumeration may be more comprehensive than another, a perfectly complete enumeration is scarcely to be expected."†

* Vol. II. pp. 205-6. † Vol. I. p. 289.

We may grant to Mr. Stewart the truth of his concluding remark, without conceding that we should make no effort to enumerate, and classify. Perfection can never be attained by man; so that if we were to do nothing, which we cannot do perfectly, our time must be consumed in total inactivity. And should any one, taking advantage of the preceding statement, allege that an enumeration of the laws of suggestion, being in effect merely a classification of the relations of surrounding objects, is not adapted to throw much light upon the nature of the mind, we answer that since the relations are perceived, or felt by the mind, we do, in point of fact, enlarge our knowledge of the mind by inquiring what are the relations which it is capable of ascertaining.

Previously to the publication of Mr. Hume's works, the relations by which our thoughts are connected together, and the laws which regulate their succession, were but little attended to. He attempted to reduce all the principles of association—or the general circumstances according to which suggestion takes place —to the three following, *viz.* Resemblance, Contiguity in time and place, and Cause and Effect. Of this attempt Mr. Stewart says, "it was great, and worthy of his genius; but it has been shewn by several writers since his time, that his enumeration is not only incomplete, but that it is even indistinct as far as it goes." It is, however, even more manifestly redundant than incomplete, according to his own principle of arrangement, inasmuch as Contiguity includes Causation. Other objects *may* be proximate, but a cause and an effect *must* be so, at any rate in reference to time; and are, indeed, classed in the relation of contiguity by Mr. Hume himself, on that very account. Dr. Brown imagines that all those relations which

guide the operations of the suggesting principle, may be reduced to the single relation of contiguity; for though the conception of a giant, and a dwarf, for instance, may not have co-existed, each may have co-existed with a certain emotion, so that either of the objects, by awakening that emotion, may suggest the other. If this delicate analysis should be allowed to be just, no charge of incompleteness can attach to Mr. Hume's classification. It would be difficult, however, to reduce every case of suggestion to the influence of this single law. I prefer, therefore, the classification of Hume, (causation being included in contiguity) with the addition of Contrast; so that the three primary laws of suggestion, are Resemblance, Contrast, and Contiguity.

### *FIRST LAW OF SUGGESTION.*

### RESEMBLANCE.

Under this general law are included a great variety of individual cases of suggestion, differing in some respects from each other.

*Objects which bear a mutual resemblance* will awaken the conception of each other. An individual, whom we have never seen, brings to our recollection, on this account, an old and familiar friend. The house of a total stranger, places vividly before us our own beloved home. A scene in nature, on which we had never previously gazed, suggests a similar one in our immediate neighbourhood, which has delighted us from the days of childhood. In all these cases, it is to be especially observed, that resembling states of mind are produced by the objects which suggest each other, in consequence of the similar impressions they make upon the organs of sense; and that to

this circumstance the suggestion is to be traced. The mind has a tendency to exist in certain states, after certain other states. The great general law is, that states of mind which bear *any relation* to each other, may suggest one another; states, therefore, which sustain the *particular relation* of resemblance, will suggest each other. The perception of the stranger's house, and the conception of our own, are resembling states of mind; the idea of one will, therefore, introduce the idea of the other, because there is a tendency in the mind to exist in resembling states, after resembling states. The suggestion cannot in this case be the result of association, because no idea of the stranger's house had existed till the house was perceived, when it instantly recalled the recollection of our own.

*Analogous as well as resembling objects* will suggest each other. There is no actual resemblance between a brave man, and a lion; but there is a resemblance in the emotion which the sight of each produces; and hence the contemplation of the deeds of the hero will suggest the notion of a lion. A lamb is an inoffensive animal; when observing it we are, accordingly, impressively reminded of the comparative innocence of childhood. This case of suggestion does not materially differ from the one already considered. It is by means of the production of similar states of mind, that both resembling and analogous objects suggest each other. The states in the former case, are what we generally call ideas, or notions; in the latter case, they are emotions. Objects which resemble each other, suggest one another, by producing resembling ideas; objects which are analogous to each other, perform the same work, by awakening resembling emotions.

Many of our rhetorical figures owe their origin to these analogies of objects, or their tendency to excite resembling emotions; and it is upon the quickness of the mind in recognizing these analogies, that some of its higher powers, such as fancy, or imagination, depend. Under the impulse of powerful feeling, which imparts an increased degree of vigour to all the mental faculties, the strong emotion of the moment will naturally suggest a variety of objects which have excited similar states of emotion; hence a profusion of metaphors will be poured forth, for the metaphor, as it has been justly said, is the natural vehicle of passion. In the metaphor the analogy, or resemblance, is implied; in the simile it is expressed;—that man *is* a lion—that man is as brave as a lion. The simile is therefore obviously inconsistent with the impetuosity of passion. In a state of comparative coolness, we may stop to develop, and fully exhibit, the analogies which present themselves to the mind; but it is impossible to do this in a moment of great excitement. "The mind, in this case, seizes the analogy with almost unconscious comparison, and pours it forth in its vigorous expression with the rapidity of inspiration. It does not dwell on the analogy beyond the moment, but is hurried on to new analogies, which it seizes, and deserts, in like manner;"* so that the blending together of incongruous images, in the same paragraph, though it may be assailed by that technical criticism which thinks only of tropes, and figures, and the formal laws of rhetoric, may be justified, as the same writer observes, "by that sounder criticism which founds its judgments on the everlasting principles of our intellectual and moral nature."

* Brown, Vol. II. p. 231.

The metaphor, and the simile, afford pleasure to the mind, by bringing to view the analogies to which we have referred. It is, therefore, necessary that these analogies be not only *real*, but *obvious*, at least obvious when the attention is directed to them. It is important to add this clause to the general assertion, because much of the high gratification derived from works abounding in the kind of imagery we are now considering, results from the unthought of analogies which they develop; analogies that had not previously occurred to us, but which, when once unfolded, we admit to be not less obvious than true to nature.

It is a very important remark, also, that these figures must not merely be just and obvious, but borrowed from objects which might be naturally expected to occur to the mind in the situation in which the comparison is made. What we call far-fetched analogies are not similes, in which there is no real analogy in the objects they compare, nor in which the analogy is not so complete as in others whose excellence we admit; "but they are those," says Dr. Brown, "in which the analogy is sought for in objects, the natural occurrence of which, to the mind of the writer in the circumstances in which he is supposed to be, does not seem very probable." The same writer illustrates the truth and justness of this remark by a reference to one of the stanzas in Grey's Elegy in a Church-yard:

> "Full many a gem of purest ray serene
> The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
> Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

"The two similes in this stanza, certainly produce very different degrees of poetical delight. That which is borrowed from the rose, blooming in solitude,

pleases in a very high degree; both as it contains a just and beautiful similitude, and still more, as the similitude is one the most likely to have arisen to a poetic mind, in such a situation. But the simile in the first two lines of the stanza, though it may, perhaps, philosophically be as just, has no other charm; and strikes us immediately as not the natural suggestion of such a moment, and such a scene." There is an analogy doubtless between talents and virtues in the obscurity of deep poverty, and a jewel concealed from the view of all, at the bottom of the ocean; but it is an analogy, not likely to be suggested by the scenery of the church-yard; and, therefore, it yields less satisfaction than the other.

This tendency of the mind to the suggestions of analogy, contributes to enlarge the boundaries of the arts and sciences. In the contemplation of a certain result, there will occur to the mind all the variety of analogous means, which might lead to the production of it. "When a mechanician sees a machine," says Dr. Brown, "the parts of which all concur in one great ultimate effect, if he be blessed with inventive genius," *i. e.* if there be a tendency in his mind to suggestions of analogy, "he will not merely see and comprehend the uses of the parts, as they co-operate in the particular machine before him, but there will, perhaps, arise in his mind the idea of some *power*, yet unapplied to the same purpose; some simpler process, by which the ultimate effect may be augmented or improved, or at least obtained at less cost of time, or labour, or capital. When the crucible of the chemist presents to him some new result, and his first astonishment is over, there arises in his mind the ideas of products or operations, in some respects analogous, by the comparison of which he discovers some

new element, or combination of elements, and perhaps changes altogether the aspect of his science. A Newton sees an apple fall to the ground, and he discovers the system of the universe. In these cases, the principle of analogy, whether its operation be direct, or indirect, is too forcible, and too extensive in its sway, to admit of much dispute."*

*SECOND LAW OF SUGGESTION.*

CONTRAST.

The mind has a tendency to exist in successive states which are opposite to, as well as resemble one another. This is another of the general laws, according to which the principle of suggestion operates. Hence the conception of a giant, may be immediately succeeded by the conception of a dwarf. The latter idea does not arise as the result of some previous association between it and the idea of a giant; but in consequence of an original tendency of the mind to exist in these successive states; of which no other account can be given, than that such is the constitution which its Creator has imparted to it. *Objects*, accordingly, which present themselves *in the light of contrast*, will suggest each other. The sight of a city, sacked and destroyed by a victorious and infuriated army—its houses laid in ruins—its palaces reduced to ashes—its streets rendered impassable by the bloody and mangled remains of the thousands of warriors who fell in its defence, and to whom no right of sepulture had been extended,—can scarcely fail to be succeeded by the conception of the same city in the day of its prosperity and joyousness—when its edifices were the theme of universal praise—when the voice of gladness was

* Vol. II. pp. 237-8.

heard in all its dwellings, and the smile of comfort rested on every countenance.

*Opposite conditions* suggest one another. The state of infancy, suggests that of old age; the state of old age, that of infancy. The conception of prosperity is succeeded by that of adversity, and the contrary. We can scarcely see an individual in firm and vigorous health, without thinking of the time when disease may reduce him to a state of decrepitude. Nor can we look at the "imperial victor moving along in all the splendour of majesty and conquest," without recollecting that, if he retain his supremacy among men, there is a mightier arm even than his, which, in the brief space of a few hours, can bring him down, even to the grave. Dr. Brown thinks that this tendency of the mind to pass from one state to its opposite, is a happy contrivance of nature, or, as I would rather say, a wise provision of the God of nature, for tempering that excess of emotion which might result from too long a continuance of the same feeling. It may awaken salutary reflection in the minds of the rich and great; it can scarcely fail to cherish the principle of hope in the bosoms of the most wretched of our race. Present misery suggests, by the law of contrast, the conception of past enjoyment; and though, for a time, this may even aggravate our distress, yet the images of past delight cannot long be present to the mind, without awakening trains of thought corresponding with themselves, "and in some degree the happy emotions with which they were connected—emotions which dispose the mind more readily to the belief, that the circumstances which have been may yet again recur;"* and thus the gracious Author of our being, "has provided

* Vol. II. p. 258.

an internal source of comfort, in the very excess of misery itself."

To this tendency of the principle of suggestion, we are indebted for the rhetorical figure called Antithesis. It both prompts the orator to the use of the figure, and renders it to his hearers pleasing and effective. "Of the eternity of ages, and the few hours of life—the Almighty power of God, and human nothingness—it is impossible to think in succession, without a feeling like that which is produced by the sublimest eloquence." Impressive, however, as this figure is—and indeed because it is so—it ought to be cautiously and sparingly introduced; our thoughts and images must not appear to be the result of labour, they should seem to rise spontaneously. And it is impossible that this should be the case, if they display not a variety corresponding with the diversified ways in which the principle of suggestion, left to its own guidance, loves to develop its powers. The field of thought requires variegated tints, and colours, and species, as well as the garden; in which a continuous succession of clusters of the same flower would prove monotonous and tiresome, even though that flower should be the jessamine or the rose.

### *THIRD LAW OF SUGGESTION.*

### CONTIGUITY.

*Objects contiguous in place* suggest one another to the mind. "To think of one part of an extended landscape," says Dr. Brown, "is to recall the whole. The hill, the grove, the church, the bridge, and all the walks that lead to them, rise before us in immediate succession." The conception of a certain town brings into distinct mental view, the streets, and

the exact succession of houses; and, especially, that house which has been long hallowed to our recollections as the abode of tried friendship, and eminent piety. The name of a certain country recalls to our remembrance all the neighbouring ones, and thus renders attainable the knowledge of the geography of the globe. If places had not suggested contiguous places—" if the idea of the river Nile had been as quick to arise on our conception of Greenland as on that of Egypt"—" it is evident that however intently, and frequently, we might have traced, on our maps, every boundary of every province of every nation on our globe, all would have been, in our mind, one mingled chaos of cities, and streams, and mountains."*

There are cases in which the joint influence of resemblance, and contiguity of place or time, are discernible. A stranger, whose eyes resemble those of a particular friend, though his general countenance should be totally dissimilar, will suggest the conception of our friend. Dr. Brown says of this, and, indeed, of every case of resemblance, that it may be reduced from direct resemblance, to the influence of mere contiguity. With submission to this distinguished writer, I am disposed to regard this statement as being only partially true. When the conception of our friend's eyes has arisen, it is not difficult to see how that will recall, by the third law of suggestion, his whole countenance and person. But how does the conception of his eyes arise? Not surely by contiguity. The stranger's eyes have never perhaps been contiguous, certainly not in our recollection, to those of our friend. The latter must, therefore, be introduced

* Brown, Vol. II. pp. 266-7.

by the law of resemblance, and not of contiguity. And I feel a strong persuasion that this instance, in connexion with kindred ones, is fatal to Dr. Brown's opinion, that all suggested feelings may be reduced to one law—the law of proximity, or contiguity.

*Things and events contiguous in point of time* suggest one another. When we revert to the season of boyhood, we find ourselves surrounded, in imagination, with the juvenile associates in our games, and sports. If we possess a tolerably competent knowledge of history, the recollection of some remarkable circumstance will recall all the contemporaneous events. Contiguity in time, indeed, "forms the whole calendar of the great multitude of mankind, who pay little attention to the arbitrary eras of chronology, but date events by each other, and speak of what happened in the time of some persecution, or rebellion, or great war, or frost, or famine. Even with those who are more accustomed to use, on great occasions, the stricter dates of months and years, this association of events as near to each other, forms the great bond for uniting in the memory those multitudes of scattered facts which form the whole history of domestic life, and which it would have been impossible to remember by their separate relation to some insulated point of time."*

There can be little doubt, indeed, that the mode of studying history, at which we have just glanced, will be found, in most cases, to be the most expedient. Let the inquirer divide the whole time which has elapsed since the date of authentic history into periods of not more than forty or fifty years each, and then contemplate the remarkable persons and occurrences

* Brown, Vol. II. pp. 265-6.

of each period, and he will find that the law of contiguity throws so firm a bond of union around them, (I must not be understood literally here,) that the period will suggest the occurrences—and, on the other hand, that each single event, will suggest the contemporaneous events, as well as the general date at which they all happened.

The great law of suggestion, which we are now considering, explains, as we shall afterwards see, the phænomena of recollection, as that word is used, in distinction from memory.

It unfolds, also, the manner in which children rise to the knowledge of language. The sign is pronounced, while the object signified by it is presented to their view; and, being thus contiguous in time and place, the sign and the object suggest each other.

Further, *connected as well as contemporaneous events* will suggest one another; and the suggestion takes place, whether the connexion be casual or invariable. The late destruction of machinery, in this neighbourhood, was connected with commercial distress; and, in future years, we shall never think of the one, without recollecting the other: here the connexion, though natural, was yet accidental. The conception of a cause is followed by the conception of an effect, &c.; here the connexion is constant, and invariable. Other objects may be proximate in time, but a cause and its effects are always so; they will, accordingly, more readily and certainly suggest each other.

To this law of suggestion we are, in part at least, indebted for our knowledge of science; for science is, as we have seen, the knowledge of the relations of bodies to each other—of which their relation, in reference to time, is one of the most important. Were

it not an original tendency of the mind for antecedents to suggest consequents, and consequents antecedents, we should in vain search for science and practical wisdom amongst men. Experience of the past would afford no guide with respect to the future; and it is difficult to conceive how the human family could, in such circumstances, be preserved from utter extinction.

There is thus a connexion in the thoughts, and feelings, of the mind. One state is followed by another state, according to a certain order of sequence ascertainable by experience, and experience alone,—of which order no other account can be given, than that the Almighty has impressed upon the mind a tendency to exist in these successive states. The general tendency operates, as we have seen, according to certain laws, to which we give the names of Resemblance, Contrast, and Contiguity. The perception of a tempest, for instance, may bring to our recollection a similar one which occurred some time ago—or it may lead us to think of the brightness and calmness of the preceding day—or it may present to our view the awful condition of some valued friend, over whose bark, as it rides upon the waves, it is at that very moment sweeping with much more threatning fury—or it may cause our thoughts to dwell upon the devastations which will enable us but too easily to track its course, ere it subside. Now, if the occurrence to which we have referred, *may* suggest any one of these conceptions, it becomes an interesting inquiry, "how does it happen that one is actually suggested, rather than another? How does it come to pass, that the same event awakens different suggestions, in different minds—and even in the same mind, at different periods and times?"

There must be circumstances which modify the influence of these general laws, or it would follow, not only that our thoughts and feelings would invariably arrange themselves in the same order of sequence —which we are certain is not the case; but that the history, or, if I may so speak, the map of one mind, would exhibit, with perfect correctness, the mind of the species—no difference existing between one mind and another, save in the vividness of colouring, or, in other words, in the liveliness of feelings which uniformly follow in the same course.

To these modifying circumstances which vary the train of thought, and feeling, in different minds—and in the same mind, at different periods—by inducing one conception, rather than others, which might have existed by the primary laws of suggestion, Dr. Brown gives the name of secondary laws of suggestion. Some of them embody the rules which have been given by various writers for the improvement of the memory, and, in this point of view, they will be found very useful. They are, in substance, as follows:

*First,* those thoughts or feelings will be most likely to suggest one another, which, when they first co-existed, or succeeded each other, remained for the longest time in the mind.

*Secondly,* those which were originally the most lively.

*Thirdly,* those which have been most frequently found in a state of union.

*Fourthly,* those which have been most recently experienced.

*Fifthly,* those which have co-existed less with other feelings.

*Sixthly,* the influence of the primary laws is modified by constitutional differences. The general power

of suggestion itself may be more vigorous in one mind, than in another; or there may be, in different minds, original tendencies to different species of suggestions. To illustrate this subject, let us suppose that, in three individuals, the principle of suggestion exhibits the following varieties. To the mind of the first, the objects which he beholds habitually suggest *resembling* objects; to that of the second, contrary, or *contrasted* objects; to that of the third, *contiguous* objects. How different, in this case, must be the conceptions which the tempest, to which we referred a short time ago, would excite in the bosoms of these men! That there is an original difference of tendency in the principle of suggestion, cannot be doubted; and, in all probability, it is, as Dr. Brown imagines, upon a constitutional tendency to suggestions of analogy, that the exalted faculty, which we call genius, depends. The splendid imagery of the poet is built, as we have seen, upon analogy—upon the shadowy resemblances of objects to each other, or rather upon their tendency to awaken similar emotions. There is thus an analogy between a veteran chief, to whom the remembrance only of glory remains, and a majestic oak, stripped by age of its verdure; the sight of one may therefore recall the other. But if there be not a natural tendency to suggestions of analogy—or if the mind of an observer be dull, and cold; and, in a great degree, unsusceptible of emotion of any kind, the two objects, in consequence of the faintness of the resembling and connecting emotion which they produce, will not be likely to suggest each other. In order to the suggestion, in this case, it would be necessary that some master mind should have previously placed them before his view in the relation of contiguity; and then they will, of course, recall each

other by the third law of suggestion. In the former case, the man is a genius; in the latter, a mere imitator. For the creations of genius, as we call them, are the suggestions of analogy. They result, probably, from a quicker and a more delicate susceptibility of emotion; in consequence of which, objects which produce resembling emotions, suggest one another; the fancy becomes creative, and the poet exhibits "new forms of external beauty, or of internal passion, which crowd upon his mind by their analogy to ideas and feelings previously existing." An equal variety and beauty of imagery may flow from the pen of an inferior poet; but his splendid figures are not the creations of his own mind; *i. e.* they are not suggestions of analogy, but of contiguity. The subject which he endeavours to illustrate, and the imagery he employs for that purpose, had been brought together by preceding writers; they suggest each other by contiguity; and his poetry is an effort not of genius, but of memory. "Copious readings, and a retentive memory," says Dr. Brown, "may give to an individual of very humble talent a greater profusion of splendid images, than existed in any one of the individual minds on whose sublime conceptions he has dwelt, till they have become, in one sense of the word, his own. There is scarcely an object which he perceives that may not now bring instantly before him the brightest imagery; but for this suggestion, however instant and copious, previous co-existence, or succession of the images, was necessary; and it is his memory, therefore, which we praise. If half the conceptions which are stored in his mind, and which rise in it now in its trains of thought by simple suggestion, as readily as they arose in like manner in accordance with some train of thought in the mind

of their original authors, had but risen by the suggestion of analogy, as they now arise by the suggestion of former proximity, what we call memory, which is, in truth, only the same suggestion in different circumstances, would have been fancy, or genius; and his country and age would have had another name to transmit to the reverence and the emulation of the ages that are to follow."*

*Seventhly,* The primary laws are modified not only by constitutional differences, which are of course permanent, but also by others which are less permanent; by the days, or hours, or minutes, of good or bad humour, and in general of all the emotions, pleasing or painful, that are able while they last to warm even the sullen to occasional sprightliness and kindness, or by an opposite transformation, to convert the gay to grave, the lively to severe.

*Eighthly* . . . . . by the state of the body.

*Lastly* . . . . . by habit. There are tendencies of mind acquired by habit, which operate somewhat in the same manner, with constitutional differences, to modify the successions of our thoughts. The truth of this is evinced by the different conceptions which are awakened in the minds of men of different professions by hearing the same story, or perusing the same book.

With reference to the general subject of suggestion, two circumstances further deserve our attention.

The *first* is, that the liveliness of suggested feelings depends upon the manner of their introduction into the mind. The *conception* of our native land, for instance, when at a distance from it, and destitute of all the comforts which are only to be enjoyed there, however

* Vol. II. pp. 277-8.

that conception may arise, must always be interesting and affecting; yet will it be more especially so, if it is awakened by the unexpected sight of an object which came from that land, and which transports us back again, as it were, to our own fire-side. The well-known story of the pewter-spoon, stamped with the word London, found by Captain King, at the extremity of the globe, admirably illustrates the foregoing statement.

The superior influence of objects of perception in stimulating the suggesting principle, Mr. Stewart explains on the ground of their permanent operation, as exciting or suggesting causes. "When a train of thought," says he, "takes its rise from an idea or conception, the first idea soon disappears, and a series of others succeeds, which are gradually less and less related to that with which the train commenced; but in the case of perception, the exciting cause remains steadily before us; and all the thoughts and feelings which have any relation to it, crowd into the mind in rapid succession; strengthening each other's effects, and all conspiring in the same general impression."*

Now if the suggested feeling produced by an object of perception grew in vividness as these thoughts and feelings crowd into the mind, I should think this statement of Mr. Stewart not only ingenious, but satisfactory. The contrary, however, will, I apprehend, be found to be the case. The strongest burst of feeling is at the moment of perception, before there has been time for the gathering and bringing forward of this crowd of associate ideas. Dr. Brown supposes that the object before us awakens a variety of associate feelings, which mingle with the perception itself, and

* Vol. I. p. 281.

form with it one complex feeling; and that the felt reality of the object perceived, gives to the whole of these associate feelings the temporary illusion of reality. Without expressing any decided opinion on this point, I am ready to concede to Dr. Brown, that when for the first time after the death of a friend, we are introduced into his study, we feel as if we were again in his presence; and should regard it, as Mr. Stewart says, "a sort of violation of that respect we owe to his memory, to engage in any light or indifferent discourse, with the materials of his former occupation before us." How this should take place without something of that illusion, of which Dr. Brown speaks, it is, perhaps, difficult to conceive.

The *second* remark is, that when we speak of an object, or conception, introducing a train of thought into the mind, we are not to suppose that, as in a procession of visible figures, one idea vanishes from our view when the others become visible. On the contrary, the prior conception, in such a case, often remains, so as to co-exist with the conception it has itself introduced; and may afterwards introduce other conceptions, or feelings, with which it may co-exist, in like manner, in a still more complex group. The sight of a book, for instance, the gift of a valued friend, introduces the conception of that friend, of his family, of an evening which we have spent with them, and of various subjects of our conversation. All these conceptions exist simultaneously. Our friend does not introduce his family, so to speak, and then disappear. He himself remains, as part of the group; and may be the source of innumerable other conceptions, all bearing some degree of relation to him.

Were it not for this circumstance, as Dr. Brown

very justly remarks, it would be impossible to think of the same subject even for a single minute. The conception of that subject would introduce some other conception; that, in the same manner, would give rise to a third; so that if the original conception could not co-exist with the following ones, it must perish almost as soon as it arose. Yet we know that the fact is very different, and that we "often occupy whole hours in this manner, without any remarkable deviation from our original design. Innumerable conceptions, indeed, arise during this time, but all are more or less intimately related to the subject, by the continued conception of which they have every appearance of being suggested; and, if it be allowed that the conception of a particular subject both suggests trains of conceptions, and continues to exist together with the conception which it has suggested, every thing for which I contend in the present case, is implied in the admission."*

Were this co-existence of conceptions and feelings impossible, there could be no selection either in the prosecution of an argument, or in the choice of imagery. To choose necessarily supposes that more than one argument, or image, is in the view of the mind; which could not be the case if, when one arises, all others cease to exist.

## ATTENTION.

Before we leave the subject of the co-existence of feelings, it may be desirable to say something with regard to Attention, as it will be found to involve co-existing feelings, *viz.* desire, in union with some other affection of the mind. By most writers, previous

* Brown, Vol. II. pp. 324-5.

to the time of Dr. Brown, attention was regarded as an original power of the mind. It is said by one individual, who exhibits the general doctrine upon the subject, that though sensations are intended to make us acquainted with external things, yet that before any internal perception or knowledge of the external objects can be obtained, the notice of the mind must be directed to them. Attention is, therefore, defined as "that faculty by which the mind is enabled to notice the objects around us, and, by that notice, to acquire the knowledge of things." I do not dwell upon the mistake involved in this language with respect to the nature of the knowledge we possess of external things; it is to another point that I now refer. The statement supposes that there may be sensation, but not perception, without attention; because (for such is manifestly its import) perception is the knowledge of things; and things must be *noticed* before they can be known. And, such notice being necessary, there must be a power to notice them; to which power the name of Attention is given. A few remarks will, I trust, render it manifest that we have no need of any such power—that all the phænomena of attention may be accounted for, by supposing the co-existence of desire, with perception, or with one of the internal affections of the mind.

Upon the nature of Desire, it is not necessary now to enter; all are sufficiently acquainted with it for our present purpose. Of what, then, besides desire, in union with some other mental affection, are we really conscious, when what we call attention is exercised? We hear a low and indistinct murmuring. We listen to it—or direct the attention of the mind to it. But what is the meaning of these expressions—or what is it that takes place in the mind, in the

case now supposed? On the most careful examination, can any thing more be discovered, than desire to ascertain the nature or cause of the sound, co-existing with the sensation itself—in connexion with an effort to place the organ in the most favourable position for catching the undulations of the air, as they approach?* If the murmuring should gradually subside, so as to become quite inaudible, while what is called attention remains, what would attention, in that case, be but expectation of its return, in union with the continued desire of ascertaining from what it results, and the bodily effort to which we have referred? I am unable to conceive what else can be included in it. Similar remarks may be made with regard to attention, when the object which awakens it is not any thing external, but something in the mind itself; it is desire, co-existing with the particular state of mind, the nature of which we wish more distinctly to ascertain.

I must not, however, dismiss this subject, without referring to the cases which are supposed to afford support to the doctrine, that attention is an original power of the mind. It is a well-known fact, that impressions are sometimes made, by external objects, upon the organs of sense, without awakening the sensations which are ordinarily produced;—or, at any rate, the sensations, if there are any, are so faint that, if we are conscious of them, they leave no traces in the memory. Upon this fact some philosophers build their opinion, that attention is a distinct and an original faculty, and that the mind is not

* As a general remark, it may be observed, that the effort, of which we seem to be conscious in attention, is an effort to preserve the muscles in that state of contraction, which is most favourable for gaining the information desired.

entirely passive even in sensation. Their argument is as follows. There cannot be sensation, without attention. The support of this proposition is rested upon the fact to which we have just alluded; for it is *presumed* by them, that, in the cases we are now considering, there is no sensation, *because the attention of the mind is engrossed by something else;* and upon this assumption, for it is nothing more, they build the general doctrine, that there can be no sensation without attention. And because the mind is active in attention, which is thus affirmed to be necessary, in all cases, to sensation, the mind is not, they think, altogether passive in sensation itself. It might be observed here, that the whole of the preceding statement manifests those obscure notions concerning the activity and passivity of the mind, to which it was found necessary formerly to advert.* On this, however, I do not now dwell. The reader is merely requested to observe that, according to the doctrine we are considering, the attention of the mind must always be awakened *previous* to sensation, or there could be *no* sensation. And this remark enables us to detect, what I will venture to call, the absurdity of the whole theory; for it *supposes* a connexion between matter and mind, in order to *account* for the connexion, which is known to exist between them. The difficulty is to shew how an impression, made upon a material organ, should be followed by sensation which is altogether in the mind. This difficulty it is attempted to remove, by introducing the supposition that the mind *attends to impressions* made upon the organs of sense (a statement, by the bye, which is utterly unmeaning)—a supposition grounded

* *Vide* p. 75—77.

upon the fact referred to above—and so receives sensations from them! But, if that be the case, the impression, upon the bodily organ, must arouse the attention of the mind, in cases where the mind was inattentive, *previous to sensation!* And what is it to affirm this, but in effect to say, that a connexion between matter and mind is actually formed, before it is possible to form one? Or, not to press this statement, are we not impelled to put the question, "If an impression, upon a bodily organ, can immediately and directly produce attention, which is one state of mind—why may it not directly produce sensation, which is another state of mind?" The grand difficulty, as these writers imagine at least, though there is no especial difficulty, as we have seen, in the case, is to get over the gulf between matter and mind; if we can surmount *that* difficulty, it must be as easy to reach the port of sensation, as that of attention.

But, as it still remains a fact that impressions are made upon the bodily organs which are not followed, to say the least of it, by the ordinarily vivid sensations which attend them, how is this fact, it will be said, to be accounted for, if we deny that attention is a distinct power of the mind, and so do not ascribe the want of sensation, in the cases referred to, to the momentary *in*attention of the mind? I answer, that there would be no absurdity in regarding it as an ultimate law of the mind, that, when desire co-exists with any sensation, the mind is thereby rendered partly incapable of receiving any other sensation. All that could be said would be, that though the mind is so constituted as to be able to receive, with equal readiness, any sensation when it is not under the stimulus of desire;—yet that it is *not* so constituted as to receive all sensations, with

the same degree of readiness, while that stimulus remains; but that sensation only, or chiefly, with which the desire co-exists. And if any should be disposed to regard it as wonderful, if not incredible, that the mind should be partly *divested* of its power to receive sensations with equal readiness, while under the influence of this stimulus, I would remind them that it is not more wonderful, than that the mind should *possess* this power, when it is *not* under the stimulus to which we refer.

There is no necessity, however, to suppose that this particular influence of desire upon our sensations, is an ultimate law of the mind; it may be resolved into a more general law—as the descent of a stone to the earth, may be resolved into the general law of gravitation. Dr. Brown states, and his statement is confirmed by the testimony of experience, that it is the nature of our emotions, of every sort, to render more vivid all the mental affections with which they happen at any time to be combined; as if their own vivacity were in some measure divided with them. Desire, accordingly, co-existing with a sensation, for instance, will render that sensation peculiarly vivid. And it is a law of sensation, and, indeed, of all our mental affections, that when one becomes pre-eminently vivid, the rest, which co-exist with it, fade in proportion so as scarcely to be felt. "A thousand faint sounds murmur around us, which are instantly hushed by any loud noise. If, when we are looking at the glittering firmament of suns in a winter night, any one of those distant orbs were to become as radiant as our own sun, which is itself but the star of our planetary system, there can be no question that, like our sun on its rising, it would quench, with its brilliancy, all those little glimmering lights, which would still shine on us,

indeed, as before, but would shine on us without being perceived. It may be regarded, then, as another general law of the mind, that when many sensations, of equal intensity, co-exist, the effect of the increased intensity of one, is a diminished intensity of those which co-exist with it."*

Here, then, we have a simple and intelligible explanation of the fact which is adduced by a writer in the Encyclopædia Britannica, to sustain his doctrine concerning attention and sensation. "He," says this writer, "whose mind is intensely employed in any particular pursuit, may have his eyes open upon an object which he sees not, or he may not hear the sound of a clock striking within two yards of him; nay, we will venture to affirm, that there is hardly one reader of this article, to whom such absences of sensation have not occurred. Now, as there is no reason to suppose that, in the one case, the undulations of the air, caused by the striking of the clock, did not reach his ears, or, that in the other, the rays of light reflected from the object, did not fall upon his eyes, which were open to receive them; the only reason which can be assigned for his not having, in these instances, had audible and visible sensations, is that his mind was so engaged in something else, as not to pay to the *vibrations of his brain* that attention, if we may so say, without which impressions *ab extra* can produce no sensation."†

Now to this theory there are only two or three objections. In the first place, no one knows that there are any such vibrations in the brain, as this writer takes for granted; in the second place, if their existence could be proved, it would be about as rational

* Vol. II. pp. 133-4. † *Vide* Article Metaphysics.

to talk of paying attention to them, as of paying attention to the motions of the animal spirits,—or to the groves, and seas, and mountains, if such there be, that lie hid under the belts of Jupiter; in the third place, the explanation of the fact, which this writer has suggested, leaves it as much involved in mystery as before. In the circumstances referred to, the individual had not sensation, because his attention was engaged by something else; this is the amount of the explanation; a statement which necessarily supposes, that there is no difficulty in accounting for sensation when the mind exercises attention—that the introduction of the supposed act of attention explains the whole matter at once. Let this writer be told, on the contrary, that after he has given the best definition of the word attention, in this connexion, which he can either produce or procure, he has in reality explained nothing; since it is just as difficult to account for sensation when the mind is attentive, as when it is inattentive. The writer should have been satisfied with stating the fact as an ultimate fact, without attempting to assign a reason for it; for the only thing that can be said, when sensation does not thus follow an impression upon the organ by which it is usually produced, is, that the mind is under the stimulus of strong desire, with reference to some other sensation or conception. This stimulus, in common with all our emotions, brightens, or renders more vivid, that particular conception or sensation; and all accompanying ones become, by a law of the mind, so faint as scarcely to be perceived. On this subject the reader should carefully consult Dr. Brown,* where the radical doctrine now stated is illustrated most ingeniously;

* Vol. II. pp. 131—156.

though the particular illustration adopted by him, involves specialities in it, which render it of more difficult application to the explanation of attention in general.

The preceding account of what actually takes place in the mind when we are said to exercise attention, recommends itself by its simplicity and intelligibility; and, in this respect, it forms a striking contrast to the sentiments of those who regard attention as an original faculty, and yet are unable to explain what they mean by it. The following statement by Mr. Stewart, is not a little remarkable. Having supported, at some length, the opinion that an effort of attention is necessary to the lowest degree of memory, he proceeds, not as we might expect him, to explain what that effort is, nor to tell us that it does not need explanation,—but to say, "With respect to the nature of this effort, *it is, perhaps, impossible for us to obtain much satisfaction.* We often speak of greater and less degrees of attention; and, I believe, in these cases conceive the mind (if I may use the expression) to exert itself with different degrees of energy. I am doubtful, however, if this expression conveys any distinct meaning. For my own part, I am inclined to suppose (though I would by no means be understood to speak with confidence) that it is essential to memory, that the perception, or the idea, that we wish to remember, should remain in the mind for a certain space of time, and should be contemplated by it exclusively of every thing else, and that attention consists partly (perhaps entirely) in the effort of the mind to detain the idea or the sensation, and to exclude the other objects that solicit its notice. Notwithstanding, however, *the difficulty of ascertaining in what this act of the mind consists,* every person must be satisfied of its reality

from his own consciousness; and of its essential connexion with the power of memory."*

With deference to Mr. Stewart, I cannot avoid thinking, that his definition of attention, "as an effort of the mind to detain an idea, or a sensation," does not give any very intelligible account of the matter; and that his concluding words are very extraordinary. If the effort, of which he speaks, were a development of a simple and original power of the mind, how could it be unintelligible, any more than other simple and original feelings? The darkness which appears to rest on Mr. Stewart's mind is, I apprehend, the entire result of his mistake in classing attention with the original powers of the mind. Had it occurred to him, that it may possibly admit of analysis, he could scarcely have failed to perceive, with Dr. Brown, that it is desire, co-existing with some other mental affection. And, as it is a secondary law of suggestion, that the most lively feelings will be the most readily suggested, he would have seen the influence of desire, which always imparts liveliness to a particular sensation, or conception, to fix it in the memory.

## CONCEPTION, MEMORY, IMAGINATION.

From the general view which has thus been given of the faculty of suggestion, or of the tendency of the mind to exist in certain states, after certain other states, it will, I doubt not, occur to the thoughtful reader, that it is possible to reduce, to this single law, all the phænomena of Conception, Memory, Imagination, and Habit,—words which have been usually

* Vol. I. pp. 107-8.

regarded as denoting so many distinct and original powers of the mind. I shall, to a certain extent, mingle together the remarks I have to make upon the three former of these supposed powers,—presenting the reader, in the first place, with the opinions of preceding philosophers, and then shewing in what light they are exhibited by the doctrines contained in the foregoing pages.

Some difference of opinion on minor points, is certainly displayed by former writers; but I believe it has been generally maintained by them that conception, memory, and imagination, are distinct and original powers of the mind; *the first* enabling us to make any thing formerly perceived, an object of thought, so as, if painters, to sketch a copy of it; *the second,* recognizing this thing as a former object of perception; and *the third,* giving us the power to form a notion of what we have never seen, and which may not in fact be in existence.

Of the differences to which I have alluded, the following constitute a part. Dr. Reid uses the word conception, so as to include in it our notions, or apprehensions, of general propositions; so that we may be said to conceive of arguments by which the truth of any doctrine may be supported: while Mr. Stewart wishes to confine its application to our perceptions and sensations; so that we can only conceive, properly speaking, of what we have seen, or felt, or otherwise perceived. Mr. Stewart further contends, that there is invariably connected with a lively conception of any object, a firm belief of its present existence. Dr. Reid, on the other hand, says that perception is attended with a belief of the present existence of its object; memory with a belief of its past existence; but that imagination, and he includes conception under this

term, is attended with no belief at all, and was, therefore, called by the schoolmen *apprehensio simplex.* Mr. Stewart expresses a very decided opinion, that conception and memory are perfectly distinct and separate powers. "Conception," says he, "is often confounded with other powers. When a painter makes a picture of a friend, who is absent or dead, he is commonly said to paint from memory; and the expression is sufficiently correct for common conversation. But, in an analysis of the mind, there is ground for a distinction. The power of conception enables him to make the features of his friend an object of thought, so as to copy the resemblance; the power of memory recognizes these features as a former object of perception."* Another writer, who adopts the same general views, referring to this passage, says, on the other hand, "It is difficult to consider, from this very explanation, that conception is a distinct and separate power, and it appears more philosophical and simple to view it as that modification of memory, which consists in recalling our past sensations and ideas without a recognition of them as having formerly existed."

Mr. Stewart thus draws the line of distinction between conception and imagination. "The business of conception, according to the account I have given of it, is to present us with an exact transcript of what we have felt or perceived. But we have, moreover, a power of modifying our conceptions, by combining the parts of different ones together, so as to form new wholes of our own creation. I shall employ the word imagination to express this power; and, I apprehend that this is the proper sense of the word, if

* Vol. I. p. 133.

imagination be the power which gives birth to the productions of the poet and the painter. This is not a simple faculty of the mind. It presupposes abstraction, to separate from each other, qualities and circumstances which have been perceived in conjunction; and also judgment and taste to direct us in forming the combinations. If they are made wholly at random, they are proofs of insanity."*

I perfectly agree with Mr. Stewart, in thinking that imagination is not a simple faculty of the mind; but I feel greatly surprised to find that opinion avowed by him. In his "Outlines" he denominates imagination one of the "*principles* of our constitution." He does not admit the faculty of taste, a genius for poetry, for painting, for music, for mathematics, into his enumeration of the powers of the mind, because they are complex; and he tells us that "to analyze such compounded powers into the more simple and general principles of our nature, forms one of the most interesting subjects of philosophical disquisition. Why then, it may be asked, has he admitted the complex power of imagination into his catalogue of the powers of the mind? Why speak of it as a *principle, i.e.* an intellectual element, when it is confessedly not such? What should we think of the chemist who, after having classed water among the elements, should declare that it is not a simple substance? In what is the mistake into which Mr. Stewart appears to have fallen inferior?

That imagination is not a distinct power of the mind is surely manifest; for if we should fail to shew that conception, memory, and imagination, may all be resolved into a more general law or power of the mind,

* Vol. II. p. 135.

it might still be contended that they are identical. For, first, what is Conception, according to the statements of these philosophers themselves, but imperfect Memory—memory which recalls the object, but not the time? And, secondly, what is Imagination, but Memory presenting the objects of prior perceptions in groups or combinations, (in a manner to be afterwards explained) which do not exist in nature? Were it said to be possible, indeed, for imagination to exhibit not only new combinations, but new elements of those combinations, there would be stronger reason for representing it as an original power of the mind. I am not aware, however, that such is the opinion of any. It manifestly is not the opinion of Mr. Stewart. "Conception," he tells us, "presents us with an exact transcript of what we have felt or perceived." There is then nothing new here. "Imagination," he proceeds, "combines the parts of different conceptions together;" so that there is, in like manner, nothing new here but the combinations. And another writer, whose general principles are the same, assures us that "the imagination can neither reproduce nor combine any sensations or ideas, but such as have been formerly perceived by the mind. No act of the will, in the exercise of this power, can call up or combine a sensation or idea entirely new. In the wildest excursions of its powers, we shall invariably find that every separate part of that group, is the reproduction of some former idea or sensation. Look, for instance, at the Queen Mab of Shakspeare,—at the Garden of Eden, as described by Milton,—the Don Quixote of Cervantes,—the Crazy Kate of Cowper,—the Passions of Collins, or any other combination, formed by the magic power of genius, and we shall find that each part of the combination may be traced to what has been seen, or heard, or

known, as actually existing in nature or art. Even the stuff that dreams are made of, is nothing more than scattered views of thought, produced by sensations imperfectly remembered, while the attention and the will are partly suspended, and the mind brought to reflect on the most grotesque and heterogeneous associations. In fact, unless the most refined conceptions of the most enlightened faculty were capable of being analyzed, they would be unintelligible to others."

There is not, then, sufficient reason for thinking that Conception, Memory, and Imagination, are three distinct and original powers. I proceed now to shew that they may all be resolved into that more general tendency of mind, to which Dr. Brown gives the name of Suggestion--or into that law by which, according to divine appointment, certain states of mind are followed by certain other states of mind.

### CONCEPTION.

The truth of the foregoing statement in regard to Conception, must be admitted by all who receive the doctrine presented in the preceding pages with reference to Suggestion. A particular conception, is manifestly a suggestion; the power of conception, is the power of suggestion. I perceive a dwarf—that is one state of mind; I immediately think of a giant—that is another state of mind. Now if there be a principle in the mind, called Suggestion—or a tendency in its phænomena to a certain order of sequence—by which the former of these states introduces the latter, what need is there for a power of Conception to originate the same state? It is not the order of divine providence to employ two powers in the production of one effect; but, on the contrary, by the operation of

a single power, to secure many results. It will scarcely be contended, by those who regard conception as a power distinct from suggestion or association, that the notion of a former object of perception, introduced by suggestion, differs from the notion of the same object introduced by conception. What difference, in fact, can there be, unless one of the supposed powers is defective in its operation, and so originates an *imperfect* notion? And, if there be no difference in the notions, how has it come to pass that philosophers, who regard suggestion, or, in the phraseology of Dr. Reid, association, as an original faculty designed to regulate the train of our thoughts, have so generally admitted that another original power—the power of conception—has been given to us for the accomplishment of the *same* purpose? They must have thought that some notions of absent objects arise in the mind, whose origin cannot be ascribed to the principle of suggestion or association; and they appear to me to have thought so on two accounts.

*First,* in consequence of their erroneous views of the nature of the suggesting principle. Two ideas cannot, as they thought, suggest one another, which have not been previously *associated* in the manner formerly described. In point of fact, however, one idea is very frequently succeeded by another, with which no union could have been previously formed; its rise must, therefore, they imagined, be traced to another power.

*Secondly,* through the influence of their erroneous conceptions of the manner in which our ideas frequently arise in the mind; *viz.* by an act of volition. There are notions, they allow, whose existence, on any particular occasion, is to be ascribed to the influence of the suggesting or associating principle; but these notions are obviously not directly under our control.

They arise only when the law of association, to which they owe their existence, happens to be in operation. It seemed necessary, therefore, to suppose the existence of a distinct power, which, putting forth its energy under the direction of volition, might secure their presence at all times when there is occasion for them;—for that conceptions do arise, one after another, by a mere act of will, seems not to have been doubted by the philosophers to whom reference is now made—an opinion which, I trust, will speedily appear to be altogether unfounded.

### MEMORY.

Nor is it much less manifest that Memory, as well as Conception, may be resolved into Suggestion. Even Mr. Stewart, though he classes memory among the original powers, admits that the remembrance of a past event is not a simple act of the mind—that we first form a conception of the event, and then judge of the time to which it is to be referred. This statement is indeed extorted from him, to obviate a charge of seeming contradiction in his statements—a contradiction which, I cannot avoid thinking, he might have suffered to remain, without materially increasing the obscurity into which his neglect of analysis has plunged him. The reader shall judge for himself:—"Conception implies *no idea of time whatever.*"*—"Conception is always attended with a belief that its objects *exist*;"† that is, it implies the idea of *present time*, like perception. Again, "We have the power, as will not be disputed, of *conceiving* a past event *without any reference to time.*"‡—"Every exertion of the power of conception is accompanied with a belief that

* Vol. I. p. 133. † Ibid. p. 142. ‡ Ibid. p. 406.

*its object exists before us at the present moment;*"* that is, we have *not* the power of conceiving a past event without reference to time. The real doctrine of Mr. Stewart, however, notwithstanding these conflicting statements, is expressed in the last quotation, *viz.* "that every exertion of the power of conception is accompanied with a belief that its object *exists before us at the present moment.*" An act of memory, on the other hand, includes an idea of the past. Now as the recollection of an event, in which any object of sense was concerned, involves an act of memory, and an act of conception, it would seem to follow, from these statements, that in recollection, we believe an event to be past and present at the same time. It is to remove this obvious difficulty that Mr. Stewart tells us, that an act of remembrance is not a simple act—that the mind first forms a conception of the event, and then judges from circumstance of the period of time to which it is to be referred.† "So long as we are occupied with the conception of any object connected with the event, we believe the present existence of the object; but this belief," he adds, "is instantly corrected by habits of judging acquired by experience."‡ Mr. Stewart himself does not seem to anticipate that this attempt to remove the difficulty will prove satisfactory to all his readers. I find it not easy to conceive how it can satisfy any. It manifestly surrenders the correctness of the former statement, "that memory includes an idea of the past," or rather it relinquishes the notion of its being a separate power. It is not by memory, but conception, that the event is placed before the view of the mind; it is not by memory, but judgment,

* Vol. I. p. 406. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

according to his own admission, that it is referred to a former period of time. Now since the notion of the event rises by conception, and is referred to past time by judgment, what is the office which memory has to perform here? I can conceive of none.

Had Mr. Stewart permitted his latter statements to remodel his previous ones, there would have been little reason to complain of want of accuracy; for what we call Memory is not a distinct power, but Conception; *i.e.* as we have seen, suggestion, co-existing with the notion of time. The remembrance of a past event is the notion or conception of that event, *as* a past event; or, in other words, it is the notion, combined with a feeling, that it stands in the relation of priority to our present consciousness. The notion itself is a simple suggestion, and arises through the operation of that power; the feeling of its antecedence to the present moment is a relative suggestion, and arises through the influence of another power—the power of relative suggestion, which remains to be considered. "The remembrance, therefore, being thus a complex feeling, is a proof of the existence of the two susceptibilities of the mind to which reference has just been made; but it is not a proof of any *third* power, more than the sight of a rose, combined with the perception of its fragrance, is a proof that we possess some third sense or power, distinct from those which give us the elementary sensations of colour and odour, of which our complex sensation is formed."* Few notions are of more difficult apprehension, than the notion of time. The term seems to indicate not a thing, but a relation—the relation of antecedence and posteriority. Now as various events sustain these

* Brown, Vol. II. p. 387.

relations to each other, and to other events, it is necessary to have a general term which may include all the individual varieties of the relation—as we have the general term man, to include every individual man. This general term is *time*. And memory is the simple conception of an event, co-existing, as we have seen, with the notion of time; or with the notion that the event stands in the relation of priority, to the present moment. The conception itself may arise by any of the laws of suggestion; for it is, as we have seen, a mere suggestion. The notion of time, *i. e.* of priority, arises on comparing the event with our present consciousness. The conception may arise *without* this comparison, in which case it is conception or suggestion merely; or it may arise, and co-exist, *with* this comparison, in which case it is memory.

There can be little doubt that, in the case of memory, as well as of conception, the notion that these conceptions are under our control, so that we can produce them by an act of volition, has contributed to perpetuate the opinion, that memory is a distinct power from suggestion or association. Dr. Reid, in distinguishing between memory and reminiscence, says, that the latter includes a will to recollect something past, and a search for it. This is not the case, as we have seen, with reference to ideas which arise through the influence of association. They come unbidden into the mind. It will be proper, therefore, to examine the correctness of the opinion to which reference has been made. Let it be observed, then, that neither Dr. Reid, nor Mr. Stewart, imagines that any idea can be the *direct* result of volition. "Here," says the former, "a difficulty occurs. It may be said, that what we will to remember, we must conceive, as there can be no will without a conception of the thing

willed. A will to remember a thing, therefore, seems to imply that we remember it already, and have no occasion to search for it."* The language of Mr. Stewart is still more decided: "To call up a particular thought," says he, "supposes it to be already in the mind." The first of these writers, however, if not the latter, imagines that volition has an *indirect* influence over our conceptions. "When we will to remember a thing," he says, "we must remember something relating to it, which gives us a relative conception of it; but we may, at the same time, have no conception what the thing is, but only what relation it bears to something else."† On this statement it may be observed, that doubtless the best method we can take to revive the recollection of something which has escaped from our minds, is to "remember," IF WE CAN, something relating to it; for in that case the ordinary laws of suggestion are likely to introduce the idea of which we are in quest. But the question is, how does the memory of the relative conception, which is to draw the other after it, arise? "If it arises of itself to the mind, according to the simple course of suggestion, there is not even *indirect* volition in the parts of the spontaneous train; and if it does not arise of itself, but is separately willed, there is then as direct volition, and, consequently, as much absurdity, involved in this calling up of the person, the place, and the other accompanying circumstances, as in calling up the very conception itself, which is the object of all this search. In either case, we must be supposed to will to know that, of which the will to know implies the knowledge."‡

* Vol. I. p. 495. † Ibid. ‡ Brown, Vol. II. pp. 375-6.

Dr. Reid appears to me to have involved himself in unnecessary difficulty, by using the term Will, instead of Desire, in this connexion; for the "will to remember a thing," of which he speaks, is not will, or volition, according to his own definition of the term, but simply desire.* And the true theory of recollection, or reminiscence, seems to be that it is *desire* to recollect something forgotten, co-existing with various conceptions, bearing a relation to the desire, which arise by the ordinary laws of suggestion, and which, again, by their relation to the event which has escaped from our recollection, may, sooner or later, introduce it into the mind. "But the co-existence of this train of conceptions, with the unsatisfied desire," says Dr. Brown, "though a complex state of mind, is not the exercise of any new power, distinct from the elementary powers or feelings which compose it. We have only to perform our mental analysis, as in any other complex phænomena of the mind, and the elements instantly appear."†

There is one statement by Dr. Brown—a statement in which I cannot altogether concur with him, but which is far too ingenious, and important, to be passed over unnoticed. It occurs in the kind of complaint he makes of the general tendency to restrict improperly the application of the term Memory. What is memory, but suggestion? What is the faculty of memory, but the tendency of the mind to suggest ideas, or objects, with which it has been previously acquainted, according to certain laws? The laws are different—the suggestions are different; and yet we are apt to regard memory as comprehending suggestions of a particular order only—those

* *Vide* Brown, Cause and Effect, pp. 74, 75. † Vol. II. p. 377.

which take place according to the law of contiguity in time, and place. To remember, is to have some object or event suggested to the mind, by something which had been contiguous with it, in time or place. Such is the ordinary view of this faculty. But if memory is mere suggestion, why, inquires Dr. Brown, in effect at least, should this one particular class of suggestions appropriate the name to itself exclusively? Why should not a suggestion of analogy be called memory, or an act of memory, as well as a suggestion of contiguity? Why should not an original tendency to suggestions of the former class,* be denominated a good memory, as well as a similar tendency to suggestions of the latter class? Why should we not talk of the good memory of the poet, as well of the historian, or chronologist? The fact which has been referred to, with regard to imagination; *viz.* that it does not create any new conception, or even the fragment of such a conception—that all the component parts of its combinations have been present to the view of the mind before—seems to give great plausibility to these statements. The substance of them cannot, indeed, as it was formerly admitted, be denied. The creations of genius are suggestions of analogy. The analogous objects suggested, must have been previously seen by the individual, or he must have formed some conception of them. Why then should he not be said to remember them, when the idea of them is introduced by the presence, or the notion of other objects? There does not occur to me any answer to this question, except one, which has led Dr. Brown himself to acknowledge that a distinction exists between conception and memory; *viz.* that

* *Vide* p. 227.

suggestions of analogy are mere conceptions; at any rate they may be such; they may not be combined with any notion of time; and, therefore, Dr. Brown should refuse to designate them by the term Memory, or give that name to all our conceptions.

It seems to follow from the preceding statements concerning memory, that, when we talk of laying up stores of knowledge in the mind, upon which this faculty may draw as occasion requires, we in fact use language which, though it may be admitted into the currency of common conversation, does not bear upon it the stamp of genuine philosophy. It must be regarded, indeed, like the phrase animal spirits, as the relict of a barbarous age. With the Peripatetic philosophy, and its notions of sensible species, &c., the phraseology in question most perfectly agreed. For if images came to the mind in perception, and rose again to its view in every act of memory, it was obviously necessary to have some place in which to store them, between the primary act of perception, and the subsequent acts of memory. Our forefathers, accordingly, converted the mind into a kind of lumber-room, in which the images of birds, beasts, fishes, and all sorts of creeping things, were crowded together, like the antediluvian tribes in the ark of Noah. From this lumber-room, one after another sprang forwards into view, as required for a moment, and then sank back into its dark abode. Strange metamorphoses also were effected, by the master magician, in the interior of the chamber (which, be it observed, was the chamber itself), as the result of which some ideas stripped of their heads, others of their tails, and, supplied with others in their room, were brought forth in this state by laughter-loving imagination, like Samson to the Philistines, "to make sport."

Now what but a relict of the old Peripatetic philosophy, which I have scarcely caricatured, is the statement that "memory expresses some modification of that faculty which enables us to treasure up, and preserve for future use, the knowledge we acquire." Why, this is the very lumber-room of the Stagyrite, and modern philosophers have scarcely been at the trouble of whitewashing it! When the doctrine of perception by images was abandoned, the indefinite and unmeaning phraseology, as I cannot but regard it, to which I have now referred, should have been abandoned also; I mean by philosophers, in philosophical works, and as formal statements, intended to *explain* the subjects on which they treat. If memory, *i.e.* not the power, but the exercise of it, be a conception of some past event, blended with a judgment with reference to the time at which it happened (and it is no more in the opinion of Mr. Stewart himself), where is the conception, when the mind is not actually forming it? In what does knowledge consist, but in thoughts, conceptions, &c.? And what is a thought, but the mind thinking—a conception, but the mind conceiving? What are they but states of mind? How then can ideas, conceptions, &c. be laid up in the mind? How can states of mind be treasured up in itself? It is not necessary, however, as it has been observed, to alter the current phraseology upon this subject; this is now, perhaps, impossible. Our concern should be to attach some definite idea to it. Let it not, then, be forgotten, that to lay up knowledge in the mind, is to endeavour, by observation, and reading, and conversation, to obtain accurate conceptions of all the objects of thought—to examine those objects frequently—to contemplate them both separately, and in the relations

they sustain to each other, especially the relations of contiguity of time, and place; that so, by the influence of the laws of suggestion, these conceptions may be introduced to the mind, at the moment when they are needed. To suppose that they are laid up in the mind, or reside habitually in it, is an error similar to that which leads some to suppose that joy, or fear, or sensation, exists in the mind, when neither of them is felt;—or that the mind, whose states are perpetually changing, is invariably in the same state. The *power* of suggestion is, indeed, a permanent guest; and, by its influence, notions of past sensations, or of prior objects of perception arise, according to the guiding influence of laws which have been formerly explained.

## IMAGINATION.

A few remarks will shew that Imagination resolves itself into the general power of suggestion. The fact of the case, admitted by all, is that many of our conceptions have nothing which corresponds with them in nature. They are complex; and though their constituent parts may have been formerly recognized by us, and, indeed, always have been so, yet the combinations themselves have never existed, and in some cases it is impossible that they ever should exist. Now the question is, How do these complex conceptions arise? The separate notion of gold, and of a mountain, may be introduced, according to the system of those who regard memory, conception, and association, as distinct powers, through the influence of either of them; but which of them can originate the complex notion of a golden mountain?—manifestly not one. We have, therefore, it is thought, a distinct power of mind, given us for the purpose of modifying our conceptions, by

combining the parts of different ones together, so as to form new wholes of our own creation. To conceive of a golden mountain, for instance, we combine, it is said, the conception of gold, and the conception of a mountain; and the power by which we are enabled to do this, is called Imagination. On this statement I observe,

*First*, That to suppose this combination to be the result of design, involves the same absurdity which was noticed with respect to reminiscence. "I cannot have selected," says Dr. Brown, "the images of gold and a mountain, with the intention of forming the compound of a golden mountain; since it is very evident, that if I willed that particular compound, I must have had the conception of a golden mountain, previously to my conception of a golden mountain." "If we select images with the view of forming a particular compound, we must already have formed this compound; and to select them for no purpose whatever, is, in truth, not to select them at all."*

*Secondly*, That this complex conception may be ascribed to the influence of the ordinary laws of suggestion; it is, therefore, unphilosophical to suppose the existence of a distinct power in order to account for it. We have already seen that conceptions and feelings may co-exist, and thus form a complex state of mind. Each part of a complex conception may, accordingly, introduce another conception. If, therefore, the immediate antecedent to the notion of a golden mountain be a complex feeling, one of its parts may suggest the notion of gold, and the other the notion of a mountain; and thus the complex notion---a golden mountain, is accounted for.

* Vol. II. p. 395.

*Thirdly*, That it is difficult to conceive what is the precise office of imagination, even according to Mr. Stewart's own account of it. It is not, he admits, a simple power; *i. e.* it is not a power at all; for nothing is, correctly speaking, a power of mind which is capable of being resolved into any thing else, any more than a material substance is an element, which admits of analysis. "It supposes," he adds, "abstraction," (of which more will be said hereafter) "to separate from each other qualities and circumstances, which have been perceived in conjunction; and also judgment and taste to direct us in forming the combinations."* Taking this statement, then, for our guide, it is abstraction which separates the parts of former combinations with a view to the formation of a new compound; it is judgment or taste, which brings them into their new state of complexity: What then is the office of imagination? It is surely not to throw light upon mental science, to call the *combined operation* of *two* distinct powers of the mind, as they are considered, a *third* power, and to give to that operation a specific name. It may be observed, also, that the language to which I now refer, necessarily supposes that we have a notion of the *result* of the combination before we make it; or there would be no room for the exercise of judgment. An artist who mixes his colours with judgment, knows the effect of their combination. Mr. Stewart tells us, that the complex conceptions, of which we have been speaking, are formed under the guidance, and by the agency of judgment; and if that be the case, the mental artist must be aware of the nature and effect of the combination which he makes; or he could only exercise judgment

* Vol. I. p. 135.

after it was made, not in actually forming it; *i.e.* he must have had "the conception of a golden mountain previously to the conception of a golden mountain."

There are cases, however, in which new compounds, or groups, are formed, when the mind earnestly desired a new combination; is there not, then, the exercise of a distinct and an original faculty here, going in quest of illustrations, so to speak, and selecting from the mass, thus brought before the view of the mind, those which are judged to be best adapted to our purpose? Let us examine this matter a little. "We sit down," let it be imagined, "to compose upon a certain subject. We must necessarily have some general notion of that subject, and a strong desire to elucidate it. In these circumstances, if our minds possess vigour and fertility, conceptions and illustrations will flow in with astonishing rapidity." The point then to be considered is, "what is their origin?" Are they brought into the mind by the powerful effort of some distinct faculty, given to us for that express purpose,—or are they introduced by the influence of the ordinary laws of suggestion? To suppose they arise by a mental effort, by direct volition, is to suppose, according to preceding statements, that they are *in* the mind, before they are brought into it. They arise then by suggestion; the strong desire of elucidating the subject introduces them; so that in fact there is no room for the operation of a distinct power here.

But different conceptions and images, it will be said, perhaps, arise to the view of the mind, in the circumstances supposed; we must, consequently, have a power to select some and to reject others; and, to the performance of this work, the general faculty of suggestion is manifestly inadequate. I answer that it

is of immense importance to form clear conceptions of what it is that actually takes place in the mind, in the circumstances referred to; for the terms, employed by the objector, are too general and indefinite. What then is its amount? I reply, that some of the conceptions and images remain in the mind, and are, accordingly, transferred to the paper; while others instantly vanish away. But is this the result of a distinct and separate power? With Dr. Brown I imagine not. The circumstance may be thus explained:—among the various images and conceptions which have been introduced, as we have seen, by the principle of suggestion, the mind, possessing a faculty which remains to be considered—the faculty of perceiving relations—discovers which of them bear the relation of congruity to its leading conception, or to the great point which it wishes to illustrate or embellish; "and these images instantly becoming more lively, and therefore more permanent, the others gradually disappear, and leave those beautiful groups which he seems to have brought together by an effort of volition, merely because the simple laws of suggestion, that have operated without any control on his part, have brought into his mind a multitude of conceptions, of which he is capable of feeling the relation of fitness or unfitness to his general plan. What is *suitable* remains,—not because he wills it to remain, but because it is rendered more vivid by his approval and intent admiration. What is *unsuitable* disappears,—not because he wills it to disappear,—for his will would in this case serve only to retain it longer; but simply because it has not attracted his admiration and attention, and, therefore, fades like every other faint conception. Nature is then to him what she has been in every age, the *only true and everlasting muse*—the inspirer—to whom we are

indebted as much for every thing which is magnificent in human art, as for those glorious models of excellence which, in the living and inanimate scene of existing things, she has presented to the admiration of the genius which she inspires."*

## HABIT.

Habit constitutes the last of those supposed powers, the phænomena of which may be traced to the influence of the general faculty of suggestion. Mr. Stewart does not admit habit into his catalogue of the original powers of the mind. He resolves the power of habit into the association of ideas. Dr. Reid, on the other hand, resolves the association of ideas into habit. His language is as follows: "That trains of thinking, which, by frequent repetition, have become familiar, should spontaneously offer themselves to our fancy, seems to require no other original faculty but the power of habit." And, referring to a good extemporaneous speaker, he adds, "When a man speaks well and methodically upon a subject without study, and with perfect ease, I believe we may take it for granted that his thoughts run in a beaten track. There is a mould in his mind, which has been formed by much practice, or by study, for this very subject, or for some other so similar and analogous, that his discourse falls into this mould with ease, and takes its form from it."†

Now if this statement had been made to a mixed, and not very philosophical assembly, for the purpose of securing popular effect, it might have passed without animadversion. But to see it issuing from the pen of a writer, who appears at times so fully sensible of

* Vol. II. p. 409. † Vol. II. p. 87.

the injury which the philosophy of mind has sustained by the introduction of material analogies—and to find it in a work, too, which was intended for men of thought and science,—and given, moreover, as a grave *explanation* of a well-known fact, and not merely as a figurative *statement* of the fact,—may well be regarded as passing strange! A beaten track—and a mould in the mind! What can the words mean?

In defining the term Habit, Mr. Stewart says, that the word, in the sense in which it is commonly employed, "expresses that facility which the mind acquires in all its exertions, both animal (*query*, what is an animal exertion of mind?) and intellectual, in consequence of practice. We apply it to the dexterity of the workman; to the extemporary fluency of the orator; to the rapidity of the arithmetical accountant. That this facility is the effect of practice, we know from experience to be a fact; but it does not seem to be an ultimate fact, nor incapable of analysis."

"In the essay on Attention, I shewed that the effects of practice are produced partly on the body, and partly on the mind. The muscles which we employ in mechanical operations become stronger and more obedient to the will. This is a fact of which it is probable that philosophy will never be able to give any explanation."

"But even in mechanical operations, the effects of practice are produced partly on the mind; and, as far as this is the case, they are resolvable into what philosophers call *the association of ideas;* or into that general fact, which Dr. Reid himself has stated, 'that trains of thinking, which, by frequent repetition, have become familiar, spontaneously offer themselves to the mind.' In the case of habits which are purely intellectual, the effects of practice resolve themselves

completely into this principle: and it appears to me more precise, and more satisfactory, to state the principle itself, as a law of our constitution, than to slur it over under the concise appellation of habit, which we apply in common to mind and to body."*

The preceding account of habit appears to me to be rather a description of the consequences of habit, than a definition of the thing itself. Habit, strictly speaking, is the regular and frequent performance of any particular mental or bodily action. When we say of any individual that he is in the habit of taking opium, we mean that the act of taking it is frequently repeated, and, perhaps, also at certain stated intervals. The term, in short, denotes that which is customary. Habits, however, may be most advantageously contemplated in their immediate results; and the direct results of an habitual action are—an especial tendency to that action, and superior facility and excellence in its performance.

*First,* the frequent performance of certain actions, produces an especial tendency to them--and the frequent recurrence of certain states of mind, increases the probability of their return. This results, as Dr. Brown thinks, in both cases, from the circumstance that innumerable relations of co-existence are thus formed between these actions, and states of mind, and other objects and events—so that they are of necessity more frequently suggested to the mind. In the case of a bodily action, performed at various seasons, and under numerous and different circumstances, the occurrence of any of those seasons, or circumstances, will suggest the action; the conception of the action will awaken the desire to perform it, (by suggestion,

* Vol. I. pp. 284-5.

Dr. Brown thinks—the conception, and the desire, having frequently co-existed before; there does not appear to me, however, any necessity to call in the aid of suggestion here,) and the performance of the action follows as a matter of course. In the same way, when a certain mental state has frequently existed, many perceptions and events must have co-existed with it; it will, accordingly, be recalled by the recurrence of any of them. Emotions may, in this manner, in the opinion of Dr. Brown, be renewed or suggested, by the occurrence of circumstances which have co-existed with them; and the more frequently they have been experienced, the more numerous of course will be these co-existing circumstances; and the consequent greater probability of the frequent revival of the emotion. In the case of a drunkard, for instance, the desire of drinking has, perhaps, co-existed with a particular hour of the day—with the perception of certain individuals, or certain objects. When that hour, therefore, arrives, or any of these perceptions occur, the desire, under the influence of the ordinary laws of suggestion, will immediately follow them.

*Secondly,* the frequent performance of certain actions gives increased facility in performing them. It will be sufficient to refer, in illustration of this statement, to the case of the rope-dancer. How is this to be accounted for? "The muscles," says Mr. Stewart, "which we employ in mechanical operations, become stronger, *and more obedient to the will.*" "This is a fact," he adds, "of which it is probable that philosophy will never be able to give any explanation." This might be asserted with great truth, if the fact were indeed as Mr. Stewart states it to be. To say that the muscles become *more obedient* to the

will, is, in effect, to say, that the same cause produces *different* effects; which is opposed by all the principles of sound philosophy. On this point, the statements of Dr. Brown appear to me far more satisfactory. Previously to the performance of any action to which we have not become habituated, we know neither the particular muscles which must be employed to effect it, nor the particular degree of contraction of those muscles which may be necessary; nor, I may add, the particular state of mind, or volition, that is needed, (for all bodily motions which are not the result of compulsion must be preceded by volition, or there would be an effect without a cause) to produce the contraction. Through the influence, however, of a permanent desire to perform the action easily, and gracefully, we make repeated efforts, and by this means we gradually discover what muscle must be contracted—the degree of exertion which is necessary—or rather, perhaps, what is the particular state of mind which is followed by the desired result. The motion is frequently performed through the influence of a permanent will, that is, a desire to attain perfection; thus, as the volition and the motion frequently occur in the relation of contiguity, the former will suggest the latter. "The two arise together, afterwards," says Dr. Brown, "with little risk of the interference of any awkward incongruous volition, which might disturb them, and destroy the beauty of the graceful movements, that seem now scarcely to require any effort in the performer, but to be to him what the muscular motions necessary for simple walking or running are to us—motions that, easy as they now seem to us all, were once learned by us as slowly, and with as many painful failures, as the more difficult species of motions, which constitute their wonderful

art, were learned in maturer life, by the rope-dancer, and the juggler.*

## Class II.

### *Of the Intellectual States of Mind; viz. Conceptions of Relation.*

We cannot long observe two or more objects together, without becoming sensible of certain relations which they mutually sustain: the states of mind which constitute the notion, or conception, of these relations, are what Dr. Brown calls Relative Suggestions;—the power, by which we are rendered capable of experiencing them, is Relative Suggestion. "I perceive, for example, a horse and a sheep at the same moment. The perception of the *two* is followed by that different state of mind, which constitutes the feeling of their *agreement* in certain respects, or of their disagreement in certain other respects." The radical difference which exists between Conceptions of Relation, and Simple Conceptions, is taken for granted in our classification, and is clearly displayed by the different manner in which they arise; for the class of affections we now proceed to consider, can only grow out of the consideration of two or more objects, or affections of mind; while the former class requires only one. The perception of a horse, for instance, may suggest, in various ways,—by some resembling blemish for example,—the notion of a cow; here the notion grows out of the contemplation of one object. But that conception of resemblance which is embodied in the word quadruped, can only arise on the simultaneous perception, or conception, of the

* Vol. II. pp. 422-3.

horse and the cow, or of other animals of the same class.

There is more danger, however, of identifying conceptions of relation with our sensitive affections, *i. e.* with perceptions. "Relation, proportion, and resemblance," says one, "are, in the first instance, distinct original objects of perception; we cannot examine matter, by any of our senses, without perceiving them. At the very same instant that perception makes us acquainted with the existence of external objects, it also makes us acquainted with some of their more obvious relations. When equal objects are perceived, we *see* that they agree; when unequal, we *see* that they differ; and the mind never loses sight of this comparison of objects, which is *suggested* by its very first perceptions. A single object would leave an insulated, independent image on the mind; but the moment that another is presented, a comparison is instituted, and we are compelled to mark their agreement or their difference. This is the first link in reasoning when the objects are not presented simultaneously; when they appear together, perception enables us to recognize their apparent relation to each other."*

This passage is, in more respects than one, open to criticism. What is meant, for instance, by a *comparison* of objects which is *suggested* by perception? Perception affords an opportunity for comparison, but it is not in harmony with the established use of the term to say, it suggests it. The language would seem to imply, that the relations of equality, &c. are not *directly perceived;* but that they are suggested to the mind in the sense in which Dr. Brown uses

* Edinburgh Encyclopædia—article *Logic*, p. 124.

the term. Such, however, cannot be its meaning; since it would be in direct hostility to the object the writer had in view in the whole paragraph, *viz.* to shew that we SEE the *relations* of objects in the same way that we *see* the objects themselves. I must, however, forbear all further remarks. My object in quoting the passage, was merely to guard the reader against what I, at least, deem a mistake upon the subject.

The *relations* of objects are not, I apprehend, *perceived;* our conceptions of them owe their existence to a power of the mind distinct from perception, though the exercise of that power may invariably accompany the simultaneous perception of two or more objects. The writer, to whom I have just referred, has overlooked this. He takes it for granted that, because we are made acquainted with the *relations* of objects, at the same time that we are made acquainted with the *objects themselves,* we become acquainted with both by *perception.* This is not the case, I imagine,

*First,* because brutes have no knowledge of the relations of objects; at any rate their conceptions of relations, if even they have any, are so faint and imperfect, as to prove that the knowledge of relations is not introduced into the mind by perception. For in perception, or sensation, they are equal to man. Their senses of smell, and of sight, are not inferior to ours. If, then, brutes *see* things as distinctly as we do, and if relations are objects of vision, why have they not as accurate a knowledge of relations, as we possess?

*Secondly,* the term relation, in its application to objects, does not, at any rate, always denote any thing that essentially belongs to those objects; and,

therefore, relations cannot be perceived. This statement may be illustrated by a reference to the relation of size. We perceive two men; we instantly say of one, he is tall—of the other, he is short. We *see* that it is so, says an objector. I answer no; because tallness is not an object of sight; it is not an absolute quality—it is not something actually existing in him like the colour of his skin. All that is to be *perceived*, in this individual, would be perceived, if no man besides himself were in existence; but in that case he would appear to us neither tall, nor short. The following statement of Dr. Brown deserves the most attentive consideration:—"The tallness of a tree, the lowness of a shrub or weed, as these relative terms are used by us in opposition, do not express any real quality of the tree, or shrub, or weed, but only the fact that our mind has considered them together; all which they express, is the mere comparison that is in us, not any quality in the external objects; and yet we can scarcely bring ourselves to think, but that, independently of this comparison, there is some quality in the tree which corresponds with our notion of tallness, and some opposite quality in the shrub or weed, which corresponds with our notion of shortness, or lowliness; so that the tree would deserve the name of tall, though it were the only object in existence; and the shrub, or weed, in like manner, the epithet of lowly, though it alone existed, without a single object with which it could be compared. These instances, as I have said, are simple, but they will not be the less useful in preparing your minds for considering the more important natures of relation in general, that imply, indeed, always some actual qualities in the objects themselves, the perception of which leads us afterwards to consider them as related, but no

actual quality in either of the objects that primarily and directly corresponds with the notion of the relation itself, as there are qualities of objects that correspond directly with our sensations of warmth or colour, or any other of the sensations excited immediately by external things. The relation is, in every sense of the word, mental, not merely as being a feeling of the mind, for our knowledge of the qualities of external things is, in this sense, equally mental; but, as having its cause and origin directly in the very nature of the mind itself, which cannot regard a number of objects, without forming some comparison, and investing them consequently with a number of relations."*

*Thirdly,* We recognize relations in those objects of thought which never can become objects of perception. Hope and expectation, we at once say, *resemble* each other; joy and grief are *opposite* to each other. Our conceptions of relations are not then to be traced to our sensitive powers; *i. e.* they are not perceptions. They presuppose another and a very different power. "When equal objects are presented," to refer again to the statements of the Encyclopœdia, we do not "*see* that they agree," but are apprized of that fact by the faculty which recognizes relations, and which our Maker has added to the powers of external perception, though it is not necessarily connected with them.

The relations which this general faculty recognizes in external objects, or internal affections, are innumerable; but they admit of a very easy classification according as they involve, or do not involve, the notion of time. The latter are called by Dr. Brown, relations of co-existence,—the former, relations of succession. Whatever be thought of this phraseology, there is a

* Vol. I. pp. 99, 100. *Vide* also Vol. II. pp. 181-2, 193, 459, 471.

broad line of distinction between these two classes of relations. I think of the three angles of a triangle, and of two right angles, and immediately recognize the relation of equality as subsisting between them,—a relation which involves no notion of time. I think again of the ascent of the sun above the horizon, and of the arrival of full and perfect day, and recognize the relation of priority and subsequence,—the one event is the cause, the other is the effect.

## Species I.

### *Relations of Co-existence.*

These relations are recognized in objects which really co-exist without us, or in affections of the mind which co-exist in the manner formerly explained,* or which are considered by us as if they constituted parts of what are in reality simple states of mind. In this species are included Relations of Position, Resemblance or Difference, Proportion, Degree, and Comprehension. To illustrate the whole of them is impossible; it must suffice to notice one or two. On contemplating a machine, and its system of wheels and pulleys, we recognize the relation of the parts of one complex object, to the whole. We not only see all that is to be seen, but we form a conception of a relation—the relation of comprehension—which is not, as we have seen, an object of perception, and the notion of which would never arise, had we not the power of relative suggestion, or the faculty of recognizing relations. On contemplating two such machines, we, in like manner, not only see all that is to be seen, but we recognize their resemblance to each other,

* *Vide* p. 30—36.

which, not being a quality of either, is not an object of perception. I have particularly referred to these relations—the relations of resemblance, and of comprehension—on account of their especial importance, which it will be necessary to illustrate at some length.

To begin with Resemblance, I observe that the faculty which recognizes this relation, is not merely, as it must be obvious to all, the foundation of the imitative arts, but the source of classification, and, consequently, of general terms; without which language, consisting only of particular terms, and each tree, and house, and object of every description, requiring a proper name, would be a burden under which the mightiest mind must sink.

On perceiving various objects simultaneously, the power of relative suggestion enables us to recognize the various points in which they resemble each other; and hence to classify them, or arrange them in different divisions,—for classification is grounded on resemblance, those objects being placed in the same division, which bear this relation to one another. Were we possessed of the power of perception merely, the resemblances, of which we speak, would no more strike us than the brutes around us. Endowed, however, as we are, with the faculty of recognizing relations, we become immediately aware that some agree, in contradistinction from others, in possessing a principle of vitality. Of these, some have reason, others not. Of the irrational tribes, some are covered with hair, others with scales, others again with feathers; many have four legs, several only two. And thus what would otherwise have been an indiscriminate mass of beings, separates, in our mental vision, into distinct classes; while, to give utterance to those

notions of resemblance which arose in our minds on the perception of these objects, and which were the spring and the guide of this mental classification, or rather perhaps which constitute it, we invent general terms, *which are words designed to express the common resemblance recognized by us in objects which we thus class together.* "That in looking at a horse, an ox, or a sheep, we should be struck with a feeling of their resemblance, in certain respects,—that to those respects in which they are felt to resemble each other, we should give a name, as we give a name to each of them individually, comprehending under the general name such objects only as excite, when compared together with others, the feeling of this particular relation,—all this has surely nothing very mysterious about it. It would, indeed, be more mysterious if, perceiving the resemblances of objects, that are constantly around us, we did not avail ourselves of language, as a mode of communicating to others our feelings of the resemblance, as we avail ourselves of it in the particular denomination of the individual, to inform others of that particular object, of which we speak; and to express the common resemblance which we feel by any word, is to have invented already a general term significant of the felt relation."*

No process could be more simple and beautiful, than the one which is thus described by Dr. Brown. That great Being who formed the mind, has imparted to it, not merely the power of perceiving the individual objects by which we are surrounded, but also of recognizing the resemblances which exist among them. This notion of their resemblance, constitutes what we call a general idea—which idea, or notion, is embodied

* Brown, Vol. II. pp. 482-3.

in a general term, as a particular notion, or our notion of an individual, is expressed by a particular term or a proper name. "In the first place," says Dr. Brown, "there is the perception of two or more objects; in the second place, the feeling or notion of their resemblance, immediately subsequent to the perception; and, lastly, the expression of this common relative feeling by a name, which is used afterwards as a general denomination, for all those objects, *the perception of which is followed by the same common feeling" (or notion) "of resemblance."**

I have dwelt the longer upon this subject because the statements which have been given, appear to me to remove entirely the veil of darkness which, till the time of Dr. Brown, hung over the points in controversy between the Nominalists and the Realists. During the reign of the Peripatetic philosophy, when ideas were regarded, as we have seen, not merely as something distinct from the mind, but as images of external objects, it could not fail to form a perplexing question, "What are general ideas?" The species, or images of the Peripatetics, resembled, of course, the objects from which they came. But all objects of perception are particular objects; there is no individual being answering, for instance, to our general notion of a quadruped. It followed then, on their principles, as there could be no perception but by images—either that we have images, which are images in fact of nothing,—or that we have no general ideas, corresponding to general terms; and that words are the only objects of our thoughts in all our general speculations. This was the controversy that existed between the Nominalists and Realists—a controversy,

* P. 485. *Vide* also Welsh's Memoir of Dr. Brown, p. 271—274.

which, in the strong language of John of Salisbury, even at that early period of which alone he could speak, had already employed fruitlessly more time and thought, than "the whole race of the Cæsars had found necessary for acquiring and exercising the sovereignty of the world."

Since the decline of the Peripatetic philosophy, the strict and proper realism of the ancient school has appeared in too grotesque a garb, to allow of its making its *appearance* even in the company of philosophers. Most of our modern writers have been Nominalists—and, some of them, Nominalists in the strictest sense of the word. Hobbes expressly states, not merely "that words are essential to general reasonings, and that without them all our conclusions would be particular, but that it is words which give to our conclusions all their generality." And Mr. Stewart states, that "There are only two ways in which we can possibly speculate about classes of objects; the one, by means of a word or generic term; the other, by means of one particular individual of the class, which we consider as the representative of the rest; and that these two methods of carrying on our general speculations, are at bottom so much the same, as to authorize us to lay it down as a principle, that, without the use of signs, all our thoughts must have related to individuals. When we reason, therefore, concerning classes or genera, the objects of our attention are merely signs; or if, in any instance, the generic word should recall some individual, this circumstance is to be regarded only as the consequence of an accidental association, which has rather a tendency to disturb, than to assist us in our reasoning."*

* Vol. I. pp. 190-1.

With all my respect for Mr. Stewart, I am constrained to join Dr. Brown in thinking, that this rigid nominalism—the doctrine, that is, which affirms that we have only *perceptions*, (which are necessarily individual or particular—there being no classes of objects in nature) *and general terms*, to which no corresponding notion is to be, or can be attached—is not more rational than the realism of the ancient schools. "The very statement of the opinion itself, is almost a sufficient confutation;" for,

*First*, It supposes the invention of a word without necessity; for a word which was not designed to embody a notion that had arisen in the mind, was manifestly unnecessary and useless at its origin, and must remain so to the present day. Now to suppose the invention or adoption of a word without necessity—a word which was not intended to express, and which does not express, what we perceive, or think, or feel,—is to suppose what I can regard as nothing less than a self-evident absurdity. Such a word would be an effect without a cause. Had it not been for the miserable controversy to which I have referred, no one, I apprehend, would have doubted that thought must, in all cases, precede language—that ideas, or notions, must exist before words. This is felt by every one, in reference to words which are appropriated to individuals, that is, proper names. We never invent and employ a proper name before the notion of the individual, who is to bear it, has arisen in the mind. The very thought of acting in this manner involves absurdity. Why then should the invention of a general term, previous to the rise of a general notion, and to which no general notion is ever to be attached, be regarded as less absurd? It is in vain to attempt to reply to this reasoning by saying, that there are many

who contend they have no general notions; for it may be answered, *First*, that general terms were in use before their day, and may have been the invention—if they proceeded from man—of those who *had* general notions; and, *Secondly*, that though the individuals referred to have no general notions in their *system*, they have them, like all other men, in their *minds*; for, as a

*Second* objection against their doctrine, I observe, with Dr. Brown, "that their extension of general terms to some objects only, not to all objects, implies some reason for this limitation,—some feeling of the general agreement of the objects included in the class, to distinguish them from the objects not included in it, which is itself that very general notion professedly denied." We have, it is admitted, general terms; now, if these terms have no meaning, where can be the impropriety of arranging, in the same class, and designating by the same name, objects the most dissimilar in their nature? What can there have been to prevent such a classification? Why has it not, in point of fact, been made? On what principle has all classification actually proceeded? How can a Nominalist defend one mode, and repudiate another? It cannot be because he recognizes resemblances in some objects, and not in others; because, if he has a notion of resemblance, he has a general notion—a notion, that is, of a mere relation—of something, in other words, that does not, it may be, exist in the objects themselves, like their colour, which would appear precisely as it does to us at present, even if all objects but the particular object one contemplated, were annihilated; but which is immediately subsequent to the perception, or conception, of two or more objects, like the galvanic effect upon the tongue, produced by placing it between zinc and

silver. I mean that, *consistently with his system,* it cannot be thus; though in point of fact it cannot possibly be otherwise. For what do the Nominalists mean by the classes, and kinds of objects, of which they speak, and to which they confine the application of the general term? The very phraseology necessarily supposes the previous recognition of resembling qualities in the respective objects of each class; and this recognition—this notion of a common relation, is the general idea the existence of which they deny. What does Mr. Stewart mean by the "common properties" of a class—the "circumstances in which the subject of our reasoning resembles all other individuals of the same genus,"—"the particular quality or qualities, in which the individuals resemble other individuals of the same class; and in consequence of which a generic name is applied to it?" This language seems to me necessarily to imply all for which Dr. Brown contends in the following passage, though it altogether subverts the system of Nominalism. "We perceive two objects: this is one state of the mind. We are struck with the feeling of their resemblance in certain respects: this is a second state of the mind. We then, in the third stage, give a name to these circumstances of felt resemblance, a name which is, of course, applied afterwards only where this relation of similarity is felt. It is unquestionably not the name which produces the feeling of resemblance, but the feeling of resemblance which leads to the invention, or application of the name; for it would be equally just and philosophic to say, that it is the name of the individual, John, or William, which gives existence to the individual, John, or William, and that he was nobody, or nothing, till the name, which made him something, was given,—as to say, that the name man,

which includes both John and William, is that which constitutes our relative notion of the resemblance of John and William, expressed by their common appellation; and that, but for the name, we could not have conceived them to have any common or similar properties,—that is to say, could not have had any general relative notion, or general idea, as it has been wrongly called, of human nature, of the respects in which John, William, and all other individual men agree."*

The remark of Dr. Brown is of great importance, that, when we speak of our invention of a general term, the phraseology exclusively applies to us, in the present mature state of our language. If language be of human origin, there is little doubt that Dr. Smith has correctly described the manner in which general terms came into actual use. The first words must have been, in that case, proper names. These names were afterwards extended to *similar* objects; the feeling of resemblance going before the extension, and guiding it—or why did not the savage give the name "cave" (the word by which he had designated the first place of that kind in which he found shelter) to the first tree he afterwards met with? And though there is, in my judgment, sufficient reason to think that *language* was not of human origin, many *words* are unquestionably so; and, in the invention and application of every new general term, we act on the very principles by which we have supposed the savage to be governed. "The general term is not the cause of the generalization; it is not at all essential to it; it is only the record of a generalization previously made." It is an "abridgment of language" rendering us capable of acquiring and communicating information,

* Vol. II. pp. 506-7.

with a facility and a speed incomparably greater than could have been the case if language had consisted of proper names alone.

Before quitting this part of the subject, it will be necessary to put the reader on his guard against supposing that *a general notion* is a kind of picture of *an individual object of the class,* comprising those qualities, and those qualities only, which belong to the whole class. Mr. Locke seems to have fallen into this mistake. "Does it not," says he, "require some pains and skill, to form the general idea of a triangle—for it must be neither oblong, nor rectangular, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalene, but all, and none of them, at once." We answer, the thing is impossible. *A* triangle must have individual properties; *a* general notion then of *a* triangle is a contradiction in terms. But we may have a notion of the particulars in which triangles resemble one another. Similar remarks may be made with reference to the supposed *general* notion of *a* man. "The general idea of a man," says Dr. Brown, "who is neither dark nor fair, tall nor short, fat nor thin, nor of any degree intermediate between these extremes, and yet is, at the same time, dark and fair, tall and short, fat and thin, is that of which we may very safely deny the existence: for a man must be particular, and must therefore have particular qualities, and certainly cannot have qualities that are inconsistent. But a dark and a fair man, a tall and a short man, a fat and a thin man, all agree in certain respects, or, in other words, excite in us a certain relative feeling, or notion of general resemblance; since, without a feeling of this kind, we never should have thought of classing them together under one general term. We have not a general idea of a man, but we are impressed

with a certain common relation of similarity of all the individuals, whom, on that account, and on that account alone, we rank together under the common appellation of men."*

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*Application of the foregoing Principles to the Phænomena of Judging, Reasoning, &c. &c.*

These words, together with Abstraction, have been usually regarded as denoting distinct and original powers of the mind. I shall first give a statement of the sentiments of preceding philosophers, and then exhibit the light in which these supposed faculties are presented by the doctrines contained in the foregoing pages. Mr. Stewart, at the commencement of his second volume, after animadverting upon the vagueness with which the words Reason, Reasoning, Understanding, Intellect, Judgment, &c. have been used by philosophers, proceeds to fix the precise signification of each term. The word Reason was, he thinks, first used "to comprehend the principles, whatever they are, by which man is distinguished from the brutes." "It denotes," he says, at present, "that power by which we distinguish truth from falsehood, and combine means for the attainment of our ends." He distinguishes between Reason, and Reasoning—the latter expressing only, as he conceives, "one of the various functions and operations of Reason." The term Judgment, Mr. Stewart thinks, is nearly synonimous with Understanding; the phrases 'a sound understanding,' and 'a sound judgment,' being equivalent,

* Vol. II. pp. 516-17.

unless, indeed, the former implies a greater degree of positive ability than the latter. He says, however, that the meaning attached to the word Judgment, by logical writers, is very different. By them it is used to denote a simple undefinable act of the mind; or the power by which we are enabled to pronounce concerning the truth or falsity of any proposition, or the probability or improbability of any event. Dr. Reid considers judgment as an act *of the mind*, by which one thing is affirmed or denied of another. He states, that the definition must be restricted to *mental affirmation or denial*. That restriction, however, appears in the definition itself (an act of *the mind*), though it has been overlooked both by Dr. Reid, and Mr. Stewart; for the *expression* of our judgments to others, is not an act of the mind, but of the organs of speech. The *faculty* of Judgment then, and the *power* of Reason, appear in the systems of these distinguished writers, to be identical; while Reasoning is a development or exertion of that power.

To the general statements of Mr. Stewart much praise is due. They partake, however, too much perhaps, of the character of mere verbal criticism; and they appear to fail in exhibiting what takes place in the mind, when we are said to judge or reason. For since words, descriptive of mental states, or affections, or operations, can at most only express the opinions of men concerning their nature, we should, I apprehend, direct our attention more exclusively to the affections themselves, than to the symbols by which we attempt to apprize others of their existence, and nature.

The strain of Mr. Stewart's remarks, is doubtless directed by his opinion, that, as judgment, or reason, is a distinct faculty of the mind, it is as impossible to

*explain* what takes place when we are said to form a judgment, as to experience a sensation. And if it cannot be proved that judgment may be resolved into a more general faculty of mind, Mr. Stewart is unquestionably right. We cannot explain what takes place in the mind, when the odour of the rose acts upon the organ,—or when we feel that two is to four, as four is to eight, because the sensation, and the conception of equality, are simple feelings, or states of mind; and to explain any mental phænomenon is to resolve it into its elements, or constituent parts. We cannot, for this reason, explain the emotion of love; but we can explain the feeling of jealousy; *i. e.* we can point out the simple emotions which blend together, and constitute, by their union, this dreadful and destructive passion.

Is there, then, any more general faculty into which the powers of judging, reasoning, &c. may be resolved? To this question, it is replied, that, if the truth of the preceding statements be admitted, the general power of recognizing resemblances, or relations, will account for all the phænomena of reason, judgment, &c. If there be in the human mind the faculty of perceiving relations, why should we conceive of another power to distinguish truth from falsehood—to decide on the probability or improbability of any event—to combine means for the attainment of ends? What is truth, in this connexion, but the conformity of words to things, *i. e.* a relation? What is the probability of any event, but its accordance, or congruity, with the various circumstances of time, place, &c. in which it is said to have happened, *i. e.* a relation? What is the adaptation of means to ends, but a relation? And, if such be the case, surely the single power of recognizing relations, includes both reason and judgment, if there

be conceived to be any difference between them;—as the principle of attraction accounts both for the resistance which a body offers to our attempts to stop its descent to the earth, and to raise it after it has fallen.

From the great importance of this subject, however, we must devote a little more attention to it. Let us take then the following illustration: This picture resembles the original. The question is, "What takes place in the mind of an individual who asserts this?" It would be generally said, I presume, that the picture, and the original, are first compared with each other—the mind then judges that the former resembles the latter—and finally gives expression to that judgment in the words to which reference has been made. Now, I would ask, what is this comparison, but the simultaneous, or the immediately successive perception of the picture and the original? and what is the judgment which is said to be subsequent to the comparison, but the recognition of a relation—the relation of resemblance, between the two objects of perception—a recognition which requires a power distinct from perception—the power to which Dr. Brown has given the name of Relative Suggestion? No other power is necessary.

An act of judgment, then, as it is called, when the words describe a mental operation, is nothing more than the recognition, or feeling, of some relation between two or more objects, which either present themselves to the senses, or are objects of conception. I judge that A is actually higher than B, though at first sight it might appear to be lower; *i.e.* I recognize the relation of position which they bear to each other. I judge that this picture resembles my friend,

stance."* And it is the faculty of relative suggestion, or the power of recognizing relations, which enables us to feel that the flake comprehends the particles of which it is composed—and that our general notion of snow comprehends a notion of the various properties which it possesses.

An affirmative proposition of this kind is, then, built upon a previously felt relation of comprehension; since it enumerates, or predicates, some quality or attribute of a subject, which may be said to form a part of the subject itself, and the notion of which is a constituent of our complex conception of the subject. The one quality of which we speak is comprehended, and felt to be so, with other qualities, in that general aggregate to which we state it to belong. Gold is ductile; *i. e.* our complex conception of gold comprehends the particular notion of ductility. Every affirmative proposition, then, of this kind, involves a mental analysis of a complex notion. Our notion of snow is complex; *i. e.* it is as if it were made up of the conceptions of the individual qualities which it possesses. We cannot, accordingly, affirm snow to be white, till, by a process of mental analysis, we have ascertained that whiteness is a constituent part of our conception of snow; though the proposition itself re-unites this elementary part to the complex notion again. "It is, as it were," says Dr. Brown, "a little process of analysis and synthesis; I decompose, and in expressing verbally to others the mental decomposition which I have made, I combine again the separated elements of my thoughts; not, indeed, in the same manner—for the analytic process is as different as matter is to mind—but with the same feeling of

* Vol. II. pp. 540-1.

agreement, or identity, which rises in the mind of a chemist, when he has reduced to one mass the very elements into which he had previously transmuted the mass, by some one of the analyses of his wonderful art."

The preceding remarks will prepare the way for the statement of Dr. Brown's doctrine concerning reasoning; *viz.* that, as expressed in words, it consists in a connected series of propositions of the kind referred to above, each of which embodies and expresses a feeling of the relation of comprehension. Man is an intellectual being; he should not, therefore, pursue the gratifications of sense only. The preceding sentence contains two distinct propositions; and the whole is an effort of what is called Reasoning. Yet few things can be more manifest than that each of the propositions expresses nothing more than a recognized relation—the relation of comprehension. The first proposition exhibits something which forms a part of our complex notion of man, *viz.* intellect; the second, something which enters into our complex notion of an intellectual being; *viz.* elevation above the pleasures of mere appetites.

It is thus in the longest process of ratiocination. Such a process contains nothing but a series of propositions, embodying and giving utterance to a series of mental judgments, *viz.* notions of relations; and "if we take away these consecutive judgments or feelings of relation, we leave nothing behind which can be called a ratiocination." "In a single proposition," says Dr. Brown, "we take one step or feel one relation; in an enthymeme we take two steps, or feel two relations; in a syllogism, we take three steps, or feel three relations: whatever is affirmed in any stage of our reasonings, is a relation of some sort,—of which,

government. Now, if the second is involved in the first—the third in the second—and the fourth in the third—it is manifest, that the fourth is as really involved in the first, as in the third. And thus it is in every train of reasoning, however long that train may be. An analysis takes place in our minds, of the complex notion denoted by the first, or original subject, in consequence of which we are enabled to predicate something of it. That which is thus predicated undergoes a similar process of analysis, the result of which is embodied in the subsequent proposition; so that when we arrive at the conclusion, how distant soever it may be, the last predicate is as truly contained in the first, as is its particular predicate, though it does not become visible to us till exhibited, as it were, in its elementary state, by the repetition of analysis after analysis. Dr. Brown compares the process to the decompositions of the chemist, in which, after analyses almost without number have been effected, the last or ultimate substance which is developed by the art of the chemist, was as truly involved in the substance upon which his operations commenced, as in that from which it was immediately produced.

II. What is the principle through the influence of which the propositions, in a train of reasoning, arise in the mind in the order required, *i.e.* in such a manner as to evolve the ultimate truth developed—or to shew the connexion which exists between the original subject, and the last predicate, in this series of propositions? To illustrate this subject, let us suppose ourselves possessed of an obscure conception that the conduct of man must undergo the scrutiny of the Judge of all. We examine what would be the subject and predicate here, if the conception were

embodied in a proposition; and we do it without obtaining full conviction, because their relation, or agreement, does not, perhaps, immediately appear. In order to this, certain other conceptions must arise in the mind—the conception of man, for instance, as the possessor of intellect, &c. &c.—the conception that a possessor of intellect, &c. &c. is a capable and an actual subject of moral government. How then do these conceptions arise in the mind, or, which is the same thing, the propositions in which they are embodied? Are they to be ascribed to what is called the sagacity of an individual, enabling him to perceive that they may be used as a kind of common measure, somewhat in the same way that a portable piece of wood is applied to two immoveable blocks, to ascertain whether their lengths are equal, or the contrary? This is, no doubt, the common opinion on the subject. "We have a certain sagacity," we are told by one writer, "by which we find out the intervening propositions that are so, and they are arranged in this order, because we have discovered them to be suitable for our measurement, and put them in their proper place." "These intervening ideas, which serve to shew the agreement of any two others," says Mr. Locke, "are called proofs. A quickness in the mind to find out these intermediate ideas (that shall discover the agreement or disagreement of any other), and to apply them rightly, is, I suppose, that which is called sagacity." And, in another part of his work, he defines Reason "as that faculty which finds out these means and rightly applies them."

Dr. Brown maintains, on the other hand, that the intervening conceptions arise through the influence of the faculty of suggestion, and according to certain laws "which are independent alike of our skill, and

of any efforts which that skill might direct." The conceptions which occur in our trains of thought do not, as we have seen, follow each other loosely, but according to certain relations. There is a relation between the notion of man, and the notion of intellect—a similar relation between the notion of a being possessing intellect, &c. &c. and of one who is capable of moral government,—and, finally, a third relation between the conception of a being who is capable of moral government, and of one whose conduct must undergo the scrutiny of the judgment day. These different conceptions, then, may arise, and arise in this order, by the faculty of simple suggestion; and they might have arisen, had we been constituted differently, without the recognition of any relation in the parts of the train. Possessed, however, as we are of the faculty of relative suggestion, the notion of man has no sooner introduced that of intellect, &c. &c. than we feel the relation which exists between them; and so in the following members of the train, till the relation between man, and the certain scrutiny of the judgment day, is at length evolved.

The same writer shews most clearly, that the intervening conceptions in a train of reasoning, cannot arise by an act of will; and that the discovery which they enable us to make, of the existing relation between the subject of the first proposition, and the predicate of the last, is not the result of any intentional application of them for that purpose. "A and D are before us, and have a relation which is at present unknown, but a relation which would be evolved to us, if B and C were to arise to our mind. Do they then arise at our bidding? Or do they arise without being subject to our command, and without obeying it? After the remarks which I have made in reference to intellectual

phænomena, in some degree analogous, I trust that you are able of yourselves to decide this question, by the argument which I used on the occasions to which I refer. The mind, it can scarcely fail to occur to you, cannot will the conception of B or C, however essential they may be to our reasoning; since to will them—at least if we know what we will, which is surely essential to volition—implies the existence of the very conceptions which we are said to will, as states of the mind present, and prior to the existence of that sagacity which is said to produce them. If B and C, therefore, arise to our thoughts, in the case supposed by us, it cannot be because we have willed them, but they must rise in consequence of laws of mind, that are independent of our volition. In short we do not find them out, as Locke says, but they come to us; and when they have thus risen in our mind, we do not apply them, as he says, because we regard them as suitable; but the relation which is involved in them is felt, without any intentional application, merely in consequence of their presence together in the mind. The skilful application, indeed, of which he speaks, involves an error of precisely the same kind, as that which is involved in the assertion of the volition of the particular conceptions which are said to be thus applied. It necessarily assumes the existence of the very relative feeling, for the rise of which it professes to account; since, without this previous feeling, the comparative suitableness of one medium of proof, rather than another, would not be known. The right application of fit conceptions, to fit conceptions, in the choice of intermediate ideas, presupposes then, in the very sagacity which is said to apply them rightly, a knowledge of the relation which the intermediate idea bears to the object to which it is

applied;—of the very relation, for discovering which alone, it is of any consequence that the intermediate idea should be applied."*

He afterwards adds,—and I believe the statement includes every thing of which we are really conscious in what we call an effort of reasoning,—"If we wish to ascertain the proportion of A to D, the conception of these, as long as the wish which involves them remains, must, by the simple laws of suggestion, excite other conceptions related to them; and in the multitude of relative objects, thus capable of being suggested, it is not wonderful that there should be some one, B or C, which has a common relation to both A and D; and which, therefore, becomes a measure for comparing them, or suggests this very relation without any intentional comparison."†

The sagacity of Locke, then, seems to be nothing more than a general vigour, and richness in the principle of suggestion, in consequence of which, a vast variety, both of objects and relations, arise to the mind; by means of *some* of which, the connexion is established between those subjects of our thoughts, whose relation we wished to ascertain.

We are all aware of the different length of time which is occupied, by different minds, in travelling from the original premises to the ultimate conclusion. This may result from two causes.

I. From the different degree of rapidity with which the mind, in consequence of the unequal strength of the suggesting principle, runs through, so to speak, the series of propositions, which are usually necessary to connect the original subject with the ultimate predicate; or,

* Vol. II. p. 561—563. † Pp. 573-4.

II. From the different number of steps, so to speak, which different minds require to take in arriving at the ultimate conclusion. "There are minds," says Dr. Brown, "which merely by considering man, and opinion, and punishment (referring to his own illustration of the process of reasoning), would discover, without an intervening proposition, that fallible man ought not to set himself in judgment as a punisher of the speculative errors of fallible man; there are others, perhaps, who might not perceive the conclusion without the whole series of propositions enumerated, though the conclusion is involved, as an element, in the first proposition, man is fallible; and, according as the particular intellect is more or less acute, more or fewer of the intervening propositions will be necessary."*

Some highly-gifted individuals comprehend the various subjects which engage their attention, at a single glance. While others reach their conclusions by a slow and laborious process, they gain theirs, as it were, by a single bound. We talk of their possessing an intuitive perception of things; and seem to think that they gain their knowledge, by a process strictly *sui generis*. In reality, however, there is no radical difference. There is as true a connexion between the first subject, and the last predicate, in any series of propositions constituting ratiocination, as between that subject, and its immediate predicate. It is not in itself, then, more wonderful, that this connexion should strike one man, and not another, than that any relation whatever should be recognized by one man, and not by another. The radical cause of the difference, in both cases, is, it is conceived, the different proportionable vigour, &c. of the principle of suggestion.

* Vol. II. p. 544.

## ABSTRACTION.

By most writers on mental science, Abstraction has been regarded as a distinct, and an original faculty, of the nature and office of which the following account has been given.

Every object which presents itself to our view, possesses a combination of qualities. To attain a knowledge of these qualities, it is necessary to consider them separately. Our attention must be directed to each distinct part of the combination, as if it were a separate object. This individual contemplation of qualities, necessarily supposes the existence of a faculty by which the mind separates the combinations which are presented to it;—to this faculty the name of Abstraction is given.

It is necessary, however, to observe, that the precise office of this supposed faculty, is not always very definitely described. It is sometimes represented as the *separate consideration* of one object, or quality, which presents itself in connexion with others. We can think, for instance, *exclusively* of the *separate parts* of any material or mechanical whole,—of the *qualities* of bodies, without regarding the substances in which they inhere. In this manner, it is said, "We can think of the leaves of a tree, distinct from the root—of the colour and length of an object, distinct from its figure and breadth—of the soul as distinct from the body—and of one affection of mind, as distinct from all others." At other times, the faculty of abstraction is represented as *the withdrawment of the mind* from all the other qualities of the combination, in order to the individual consideration of one, which we wish particularly to examine. Mr. Stewart, at one time, tells us, that "Abstraction is

that faculty by which the mind separates the combinations which are presented to it;" and, at another, that it is "the power by which certain qualities are considered apart from the rest." Thus we have at least three definitions of Abstraction. It is *the power of withdrawing the mind* from certain qualities, when a combination is presented—the power of *separating the qualities*, in this combination—the power of *considering one of them*, apart from the rest, after the separation has been effected.

In reference to the preceding statements, it is cheerfully conceded, that we do, in point of fact, frequently regard one object, or quality, apart from all others; but the reader is requested to consider, whether a distinct faculty of mind is required to enable us to do this. On the principles of Mr. Stewart himself, what is this separate consideration of qualities, but *attention* to them? "Abstraction," he tells us, "is that power by which certain qualities are considered apart from the rest." "Attention," he defines, "as an effort of mind to detain the perception of an object (or a quality), and to contemplate it exclusively of every thing else." Unless, then, Mr. S. makes some nice distinction between an *effort* to contemplate qualities apart from the rest, and the actual *contemplation* of them, Abstraction and Attention are, on his system, identical. If this distinction is made by him, it follows that the actual consideration of a particular quality is abstraction; and that the mental effort thus to consider it, is attention; a statement which is, to my mind, almost equivalent with the declaration, that attention is an effort to be attentive!

And if the consideration of certain *qualities* apart from the rest, be regarded as an exercise of the

faculty of Abstraction, why should not the notice which is given to thousands of individual *objects*, every day of our lives, be considered a manifestation of the same faculty? The sound of thunder is heard, we listen to nothing else. A meteor darts across the sky, we see nothing else. An officer pursues a suspected thief through the intricacies of a crowded city, he observes nothing else. Is the separate consideration which is thus given to these things, an effort of abstraction?

If it be said that the withdrawment of the mind from other objects, that it may give its attention to those to which reference has been just made, is an exercise of abstraction, I answer that the mind cannot be said, with any propriety, to withdraw itself. It does not *leave* those which cease to excite its interest, but is *attracted* by others which awaken a deeper interest. It will be found, I believe, to be a truth confirmed by experience, that neither qualities, nor objects, will excite the separate consideration of the mind, in the sense which Mr. Stewart attaches to the words, *which do not awaken some strong emotion.* It is the excited emotion which detains, so to speak, the perception, or conception, by which it was occasioned, while, by a law of the mind, to which reference was made in considering the phænomena of attention, all accompanying perceptions, or conceptions, fade and disappear. The mind is accordingly said to withdraw itself from certain objects, or qualities, that it may fix its undivided attention upon others.

Should it be alleged that abstraction, strictly speaking, is a separation of combinations of qualities—the withdrawment of some from the rest, for the purpose of individual and attentive examination,—I would ask,

what is meant by the statement? It is impossible to withdraw qualities from the substances in which they are to be found. It is further impossible to effect an *actual* separation in the combinations of qualities which present themselves to us. We can neither separate the colour from the gold, nor its yellowness from its ductility. If it be said we can separate them mentally, I ask, again, "what is this mental separation, but a separate consideration of the qualities?" Do we any otherwise separate the ductility of gold from its colour, than by thinking of its ductility, and not thinking of its colour? This will not be pretended. But, it will be said, we can thus mentally separate one quality from a combination of qualities, with a view to a more particular examination. I answer, that the statement involves a contradiction; it supposes that the separation is already made, when the mental effort is put forth by which it is to be effected. To attempt to separate the colour from the gold, supposes (if we know what we attempt) that we have separately considered or thought of the colour; *i.e.* that the abstraction is made, before we attempt to make it. "If by this," (*viz.* the power of separating combinations,) says Mr. Welsh, "it is implied that the mind has a power of intentional separation, the existence of the faculty of abstraction must be altogether denied. The exertion of such a power would, in every instance, involve a contradiction; for the state preceding the intentional separation, involves the very abstraction which it is supposed to produce. If we know the part that we single out, we have already performed all the separation that is necessary; if we do not know what we are singling out, the separate part of the complex whole may indeed arise to our conception, but the operation of a peculiar faculty is not necessary to

account for it thus arising."* Any part of a whole may arise by one of the laws of simple suggestion; and in this way we are led to the separate consideration of that part, without any intentional withdrawment of the mind from the rest.

This supposed faculty of abstraction has been regarded as the ground-work of generalization. "The classification of different objects," says Mr. Stewart, "supposes a power of attending to some of their qualities or attributes, without attending to the rest, for no two objects are to be found without some specific difference; and no assortment or arrangement can be formed among things not perfectly alike, but by losing sight of their distinguishing peculiarities, and limiting the attention to those attributes which belong to them in common."† On this statement it is obvious to remark, that it does not inform us how the common resembling qualities are recognized by the mind; for the mere act of attention to the attributes of various bodies would not apprize us of their differences, or their resemblances, if we had not the faculty of recognizing relations in general. We are not however left, as we have seen, without this faculty; and the possession of it renders unnecessary the supposed distinct powers of abstraction and generalization; for the latter, as well as the former, is by some considered an original faculty. To recognize relations is, in fact, to generalize. At any rate, when a relation of resemblance is felt, no other power, certainly, is necessary to guide us in classing together all those objects which agree in exciting this common relative feeling. There is no need to withdraw the mind from their distinguishing peculiarities; nor, indeed, can this be done

* Memoirs, pp. 289-90. † Vol. I. p. 155.

by an act of volition. The interest excited by the discovery of their common resembling qualities, will, on principles formerly explained, cause the perception or conception of their peculiarities or diversities to fade and disappear.*

Thus classification, and generalization, are the result not of abstraction, but of suggestion; or of that faculty by which we recognize relations. "In consequence of this principle of our minds," says Dr. Brown, "we are almost incessantly feeling some relation of similarity in objects, and omitting, in consequence, in this feeling of resemblance, the parts or circumstances of the complex whole, in which no similarity is felt. What is thus termed abstraction, is the very notion of partial similarity."†

Our abstract notions of qualities, &c. are, also, derived from this faculty. Objects become known to us only by their qualities; the resemblances, accordingly, which we recognize in objects, must be in one or more of their qualities. It sometimes happens that our attention is directed chiefly to the *objects* as possessing similar qualities. "But there are other cases in which our attention is directed to the resembling *qualities*, without referring them to the objects in which they reside. Thus in looking at snow, we feel a resemblance in the colour to that of a swan; and making the quality, and not the subject, the object of our thoughts, we have the notion of whiteness."‡

Abstraction is not, then, an original power; the phænomena which have been usually ascribed to it, may all be resolved into the faculty of suggestion.

* *Vide* p. 273. † Vol. III. p. 21. ‡ Welsh's Memoirs, pp. 273-4.

## Species II.

### *Relations of Succession.*

These relations involve the notion of time; indeed the connexion which their subjects bear to each other, as prior or posterior, constitutes the very relation to which we now refer.

Of events and feelings which stand in this relation to each other, some may be casually prior, or posterior, and others may be permanently, and invariably so.

On the occurrence of two events or feelings, of this latter class, one of which is the immediate antecedent of the other, the notion of their relation, as cause and effect, arises in the mind—a conception, that is, of the aptitude of one to precede, and of the other to follow; so that, in all similar circumstances, this will be the order of their occurrence in every subsequent period of time.

The knowledge of this relation, or of the aptitudes of events and feelings to precede and follow one another, supplies, in some measure, the place of *history*. When our minds recur to the ages which are past, we feel certain that, as it regards the changes which take place in the physical world, and the fluctuations of human thought and feeling, the occurrences of to-day may be regarded as a tolerably accurate specimen of what has been going on in the world since its creation.

It supplies further, also, in a similar degree, the place of *prophecy*. It communicates, to a certain extent, the gift of foreknowledge. It lifts up the veil which hangs over futurity. It enables us to declare not only what has been, but what will be—

to lead the future, as Dr. Brown says, as if it were present. If the contemplation of objects, as prior and posterior, gave us no conviction that in all future time, the order of their occurrence will, in all similar circumstances, be the same, it is manifest that we should be utterly unable to take any thought for the morrow—to provide against evil—to devise measures for seizing, and appropriating the approaching good. Nay, it is further manifest, that we should be unable to take thought for the present moment. The fire that burnt us yesterday, would excite no dread of a similar fire to-day, if it were not regarded as the cause of our pain. The food that nourished us yesterday, would prompt no exertion to obtain a supply of similar food to-day, if we were not impressed with a feeling of the relation of that food to our renovated strength and spirits. It does not appear that mere memory would be sufficient. We recollect that some time ago, perhaps at a certain hour, we entered a room, and began to sing, at the very instant when the ceiling fell with violence, inflicting a serious wound upon us; yet we enter the same room to-day, after the ceiling has been renewed, at the same hour, and begin to raise the same notes, without the slightest fear of a recurrence of the disastrous event—because we do not suppose that our singing was its cause. And such would be the case generally without the notion of causation. It is our conception of the fitness of some events to precede, and of others to follow, that renders the experience of the past, any guide in reference to the present and the future. "The knowledge," says Dr. Brown, "of these invariable relations of succession, becomes to us *inestimable*—not as a medium only of intellectual luxury—but as a medium of all the arts of life, and even of

the continuance of our very physical existence, which is preserved only by an unceasing adaptation of our *actions* to the fitnesses or *tendencies* of external things."*

## Order II.

### OF OUR INTERNAL AFFECTIONS, COMPRISING OUR EMOTIONS.

Much curious speculation has been excited, we are told, among philosophical inquirers, respecting the nature and origin of this class of our feelings. Some deny that they constitute an order generically distinct from preceding ones. Some "trace them exclusively to the principle of association. Others consider them as original tendencies in the constitution of our nature;" and others, again, regard them "as referable to the different views of the understanding."

Our Emotions differ, however, so manifestly from our intellectual states of mind, by that peculiar vividness of feeling which every one understands, though it may be impossible to embody it in any verbal definition, that it is not a little singular that one should be confounded with the other, by any who have simply *remembered,* and *compared,* and have also *loved,* or *hated, desired,* or *feared.* It is difficult to account for the fact that they have been thus confounded, without supposing that the philosophers referred to fell into the error of Condillac—the error of supposing that a feeling which is the consequence of certain other previous feelings, is only another form of those feelings themselves. It is conceded that certain views of the understanding are necessary antecedents to certain emotions,—that a

* Vol. III. p. 5.

variety of circumstances may have conjoined their influence to fix our affections on the objects which engage them. But surely the emotions or affections themselves, are states of mind generically different from the perceptions, or conceptions, by which they are preceded, and produced. They presuppose the existence of different susceptibilities of mind. "We might have been constituted," says Dr. Brown, "with respect to our intellectual states of mind, so as to have had all the varieties of these, our remembrances, judgments, and creations of fancy, *without our emotions*." On this point, however, it is not my intention to enlarge. I feel, indeed, at a loss what to say which would be likely to convince those whom the evidence of consciousness does not teach, that the recollection of a certain event, for instance, or the recognition of a particular relation, is a state of mind which differs essentially from the emotion of joy or sorrow, love or hatred.

The business of the mental philosopher is, we have said, to analyze and classify. This statement is not less true with regard to our emotions, than to our intellectual states of mind. It appears, however, more desirable to classify the emotions not in their elementary state, but in those complex conditions in which they generally exhibit themselves in the world, and have received certain definite characteristic names; and, in the consideration of the separate affections, to state the elements of which the complex whole is composed.

In arranging all the vivid feelings to which reference is now made under the general head of Emotions, it is intended, of course, to intimate that they do not admit of generic distinctions. Some writers, indeed, conceive that they form three divisions, under the

generic names of Passions, Emotions, and Affections. In this arrangement they are supported by the authority of Dr. Cogan, who tells us, that the almost universal disagreement among philosophers in their ideas concerning the precise nature of a passion, emotion, and affection, was one, among other inducements, to the publication of his work on the Passions. Under the influence of regret at this circumstance, and of his opinion, that the three terms just mentioned designate so many generic varieties of those vivid feelings to which we are about to attend, he is, of course, very anxious to give a precise definition of them. He tells us, that he paid great attention to the workings of the human mind—that he has pursued the analytical method of examination, &c.; but the manner in which he writes forces upon my mind the conviction, not merely that there are no such generic varieties as those for which he contends, but that, like many others, he has spent more time in investigating the meaning of terms, than in actually observing the operations of mind. I shall lay before the reader the substance of Dr. Cogan's remarks, together with a few observations which are manifestly suggested by them.

The three terms, Passions, Emotions, and Affections, are always employed, he tells us, to express the sensible effects which objects, or ideas concerning them, have upon *the mind.* And, after taking a rapid glance at the manner in which the first of the terms is used, he proceeds to say that, in most of these applications, no attention has been paid to the primitive signification of the word Passion, "although this appears," he adds, "to be the safest method to recall us from those aberrations to which we are perpetually exposed." Under the guidance of this

principle, he goes on to state, that the primary idea attached to the word is that of *passivity*, or being *impulsively* acted upon—that the term Passion, therefore, may with strict propriety be used, and used exclusively, to represent the *first feeling, the percussion*, as it were, of which the mind is conscious from some impulsive cause; by which it is wholly acted upon, without any efforts of its own, either to solicit, or to escape the impression.

With reference to Emotion, the Doctor says, "The state of universal passiveness described above, in consequence of this sudden percussion of mind, is of short duration. The strong impression, or vivid sensation, immediately produces a re-action correspondent to its nature, either to appropriate and enjoy, or to avoid and repel the exciting cause. This re-action," he adds, (*query* of *the mind?*) "is very properly distinguished by the term Emotion. Emotions, however," he immediately afterwards states, "are principally and primitively applicable to the sensible changes, and visible effects, which particular passions produce upon *the frame* in *consequence* of this re-action, or particular agitation of mind."

Again, he tells us, that "the term Emotion is sometimes expressive of lively *sensations* which do not produce visible effects, in any degree proportionate to their feelings. In emotions the mind is not so completely or necessarily passive; it possesses some power over the external signs, &c."

Finally, he states, that the term is frequently employed to mark the first impression which particular objects make upon susceptible minds, whether they remain concealed, or not. "Thus in the fine arts," he adds, "the charms of musical compositions which are novel to us;—the first view of a gallery of

paintings possessing distinguished merit;—the surprise of a beautiful or elevated sentiment, or poetic description, will generally make a more vivid impression upon us, than that which is felt, in a continued, or renewed contemplation of the same subjects."

The third term, Affection, has, he tells us, a different signification from either of the preceding ones. "It always represents a less violent, and generally a more durable influence which things have upon the mind. It is applicable to the manner in which we are *affected* by them for a continuance. It supposes a more deliberate predilection and aversion, in consequence of the continued influence of some prevailing quality. This distinguishes it from the transient influence of passion. Nor is it intimately connected with any external signs; which distinguishes it from emotions, &c. &c."*

On these statements the following observations are submitted to the reader; *First*, that in his explanation of the term Passion, Dr. C. appears to proceed on a radical mistake—the mistake of supposing that the nature of any state or operation of the mind, may be ascertained by a reference to the primitive signification of the term which is used to denote it. He has given us, it is probable, a correct account of the original meaning of the term passion; yet he merely exhibits thereby the opinion of those who first used the term to designate the states of mind in question. Had they been infallible men, we should be bound of course to believe that what we call the passions are states of mind in which it is altogether passive. But since they were not infallible, what more than the ordinary respect which we pay to the judgment

* *Vide* Treatise on the Passions, 3d Edition, p. 2—10.

of intelligent men, do we owe to *their* judgment, of which the word in question is a manifestation? Language is only the expression of human opinion. To refer, therefore, to the original, or even general acceptation of mere terms, with a view to ascertain the nature of those mental states or operations which they are used to denote, is worse than trifling. It is to allow the opinions and authority of men to regulate our sentiments, while we profess to derive them, as Dr. Cogan does, from an actual examination of the workings of the mind.

Suppose we were to apply the principles of this writer to the mental state, denoted by the term Idea. It is derived from the Greek ειδεω, to see. An idea must, therefore, be something which is capable of being seen; *i. e.* an idea of a house must be an image of a house. Thus we are plunged at once into the bog of the Stagyrite. I am not certain whether the Doctor himself would wish to make his escape from the spot to which his philosophy must infallibly conduct him.

*Secondly*, that it is impossible to perceive clearly the line of distinction which is drawn by Dr. Cogan, between passions, emotions, and affections—or, as it would perhaps be more correct to say, that he has himself failed to exhibit any line of distinction. In so far as the words denote states of mind, he does not seem to think that there is any specific difference between them. Of passions and emotions, he says, the difference is simply in degree, not in kind; and of the affections, he adds, some of them indicate themselves so strongly, that they approach to emotions. The passions, according to this writer, seem to denote the more violent excitements of mind—the emotions, those which are in a degree less powerful—and the

affections, such as are comparatively moderate and gentle. But where is the mental thermometer by which they are to be measured? Who shall tell us when passion sinks to emotion, and when emotion rises to passion? According to the doctrine of Cogan, we need a thermometer for every individual mind; for what is passion in one man, would scarcely rise to emotion in another; yet thermometer we have none.

It is on this account that a classification, founded on a mere difference of degree, is inadmissible; a division should be built on a specific difference. How immensely do our sensations differ from each other in point of intensity! Yet what philosopher has ever thought of dividing them into the most intense—the moderately intense—the least intense? And yet, with respect to sensations, there would be a more manifest reason for such a division; inasmuch as all our sensations may become actually painful by their intensity; and might accordingly seem, on that account, to admit of being arranged in the three divisions of pleasant—painful—and indifferent. For reasons formerly assigned, however, such a mode of classification is never adopted. How infinite are the gradations in that state of mind to which the name of Love is assigned! Why should we not, then, on the principles of Dr. Cogan's classification, subdivide it into three classes, and talk of the passion of love—the emotion of love—and the affection of love, as though the feeling in each class were specifically different?

There is, in fact, a far broader and more visible line of distinction between the various kinds of emotions specified by Cogan, than between the three classes of *mental* emotions, affections, and passions. Passions invariably produce visible effects; but this is also the

case with some emotions. Affections do not indicate themselves by visible effects; and there are some emotions which remain concealed in the bosom. Where then is the broad line of distinction between these three classes? There is obviously none. But, on the other hand, while some emotions are mere bodily affections, others have, according to his statement, their seat in the mind—a difference which causes a broad line of distinction between them, and constitutes a basis for classification.

*Thirdly*, that some of the statements, to which reference has been made, are contradictory. The book is written for the professed purpose of explaining certain *mental states*, not any *mere bodily affections*, how important soever they may be. In harmony with this professed object, the author states that the three terms Passions, Emotions, and Affections, are always employed to express the sensible effects which objects, or ideas concerning them, have upon *the mind*.* And yet, when he comes to define Emotion, he tell us, in effect, that it denotes not an effect upon *the mind* at all, but upon the animal frame!

In an introductory paragraph he gives his opinion, that emotion is the re-action of the *mind*, after a state of passion; and, in the very next, he declares, in effect, that it is not the re-action of *the mind*, but the *consequence* of this re-action—or its visible effects upon the frame! At one moment, he assures us that the word Passion may be used exclusively to denote the *first feeling* of which the mind is conscious from some impulsive cause; while, in the very next, he states, that though passion denotes exclusively the first feeling, emotion is frequently employed to mark the first

* P. 2.

*impression* which particular objects make upon susceptible minds. From a work containing statements such as these, it is vain to expect precision. And yet the writer complains bitterly of the want of precision in philosophical investigations, and adds, "it is hoped the above explanations of the terms Passions, Emotions, and Affections, will obtain the approbation of philosophic readers, *since they were suggested to the author by an attention to the workings of the human mind.*" I find it impossible to doubt that Dr. Cogan deceived himself here. To talk of ascertaining that emotion is an effect produced *upon the body*, by attention to the workings *of the mind*, cannot be regarded as much less absurd, than to look to consciousness to explain the nature of a broken leg. If emotion were what this writer represents it, it would not be a *mental affection*. The intellectual philosopher would have no more concern with it than with the fever, or paralysis, which are sometimes the results of strong mental excitement. To gain any knowledge of it, we should be constrained to resort to perception. There are, doubtless, in Dr. Cogan's book, many good general descriptions of the passions in those complex forms in which they ordinarily present themselves to our view; but this introductory chapter is fatal to all hope of meeting with enlightened philosophical views, with just and delicate analysis, or even with tolerable precision. Were there no other complaint to make, the grossly material vehicle in which he has chosen to communicate his thoughts—adapted as it is either to convey no notions, or false ones—would be sufficient to justify severity of censure. To define passion *as the percussion of the mind*, is to give us no information, or to materialize the mind. To talk of the *impetus* of the passion upon the corporeal system, is to fall into

the same error. If the meaning be, that the passion awakens desire or fear, the one leading us to avoid, and the other to pursue, the object which kindled the passion, why is this not said? Why does the Doctor write, while professing to admit the separate existence of mind, as if matter and mind had common properties, and were governed by common laws?

While I thus oppose the statements of Dr. Cogan, and deny that there is any specific difference between what he denominates Passions, Emotions and Affections, I would not be understood as wishing to discard the terms themselves. It is convenient to have words which mark different degrees of intensity and permanence in the same radical feeling, as, in grammar, it is desirable to invest the adjective with different degrees of comparison. The word Passion may be very properly retained to denote the superlative degree, so to speak, of any of those feelings which sometimes blaze with fierceness for a moment, and then expire; or, as Dr. Brown says, "to designate our desires when they become very vivid and permanent;" thus we talk of the passion of the miser, the passion of ambition, which is only an exalted and lasting desire of worldly power and splendour. The word Affection may be advantageously employed to denote emotions when they exist in a moderate and gentle state, and have the character of perpetuity; as the parental affection, conjugal affection, &c. Still all our states of mind, of this kind, may be arranged under the general head of Emotions. They admit of classification, like sensations; but they display no generic varieties. I proceed to state the principle of classification; and then to consider the emotions separately.

Very different modes of classification have been

proposed and adopted by writers on this subject. "Some have placed them," says Cogan, "in contrast to each other, as hope and fear, joy and sorrow, &c. Some have considered them as they are personal, relative, social: some according to their influence at different periods of life: others according as they relate to past, present, or future time; as sorrow principally refers to things past; joy and anger to present scenes; hope and fear respect futurity. The academicians advanced, that the principal passions are fear, hope, joy and grief." "Dr. Hartley has arranged the *passions* under five grateful, and five ungrateful ones. The grateful ones, are love, desire, hope, joy, and pleasing recollection; the ungrateful are hatred, aversion, fear, grief, displeasing recollection." The affections, termed by him Intellectual Pleasures and Pains, are arranged under six general classes,—imagination, ambition, self-interest, sympathy, theopathy, and the moral sense. A concise account of the system of Hartley is given by Belsham in his Elements of Moral Science. Dr. Watts divides the passions into two leading classes—the primitive and derivative. The primitive he subdivides into two ranks. *First*, admiration, love, and hatred. *Second*, the divers kinds of love and hatred; as esteem, contempt, benevolence, malevolence, complacency, displacency. The derivatives are desire, aversion, hope, fear, gratitude, anger, &c.

Mr. Grove's system resembles that of Watts. Drs. Doddridge and Beattie appear also to have approved of it.

Dr. Cogan's classification is founded on the assumption that, in the nature of man, there is the principle of self-love, and the social principle. Some of our passions and affections owe their origin, he supposes,

to the former—others to the latter principle; and thus are formed the two classes, into which he divides all our feelings of the kind we are now considering. Under each of these classes, he admits two orders.

Order the *first,* includes those passions which are excited by the idea of good. Order the *second,* comprehends those which are awakened by the idea of evil.

The first order admits of subdivision in the following manner. The good may be in our possession; when it will occasion various degrees of enjoyment, from simple gratification to ecstacy. Or, it may not be in our possession; when, according to different circumstances, it will inspire desire or hope.

The second order may be thus subdivided. The evil to which it relates may be the loss of good possessed or desired. Or, it may be apprehension of loss, or injury, or disappointment. The loss or disappointment will occasion sorrow; the apprehension, fear. The cause of this sorrow and fear may be some agent, whose designed conduct, or whose inadvertency, may threaten and produce injuries, and thus excite anger in various degrees.

The second class, comprehending the passions and affections derived from the social principle, admits of two orders.

Order the *first,* includes those which are excited by benevolence, in which good is the predominant idea. From benevolence flow good desires, and dispositions, and good opinions. Out of good desires spring the social affections, and the sympathetic affections. From good opinions proceed gratitude, admiration, esteem, respect, veneration, fondness, &c.

Order the *second,* including those passions and affections in which evil is the predominant idea, may be subdivided into *malevolent desires and dispositions*—

as malignancy, envy, rage, &c. &c. &c.; and *displacency*—as horror, contempt, indignation, &c.

Dr. Brown's arrangement is given us in the following terms: "The most obvious principle of general arrangement seems to me their relation to time—as immediate, or involving no notion of time whatever;—as retrospective, in relation to the past;—or as prospective, in relation to the future. Admiration, remorse, hope, may serve as particular instances to illustrate my meaning in this distinction. We admire what is before us,—we feel remorse for some past crime,—we hope for some future good."*

There are other advantages of this arrangement besides the one which Dr. Brown has himself mentioned. It is simple, and it is comprehensive. There are none of our emotions, in those complex states in which they usually present themselves, and to which particular names have been attached, which do not easily arrange themselves in one or other of these classes; though, it must be acknowledged, that all the elementary parts, when the complex feeling is analyzed, are not invariably found to belong to the same class with the complex feeling itself.

Dr. Cogan's arrangement does not include all our emotions; it rejects, as we shall afterwards see, the feelings of surprise, wonder, and astonishment; and it does not classify love and hatred, desire and aversion, with our passions, but rather represents them as the CAUSES of our passions. Indeed the statements of this writer, on this point, constitute the most objectionable part of his book. They proceed, I humbly conceive, on a radically mistaken conception of the nature of the human mind. We cannot think justly with regard to mind, without supposing that each of

* Vol. III. pp. 36-7.

the various emotions which it experiences, presupposes the existence of a power, or susceptibility, in the mind of becoming the *subject* of that emotion. No joy, no grief, no anger, &c. &c. could be felt, had not the Creator of the mind imparted to it a distinct susceptibility (in the sense formerly explained) of experiencing joy, grief, anger, &c. Dr. C. has entirely forgotten this. He exhibits all our emotions, or passions as he calls them, as necessarily springing out of one single principle, to which he gives the name of love to well-being. This he regards as the first and leading principle of our nature, and all others as the necessary consequences of this principle, in beings similarly formed and circumstanced with ourselves. Implant in the mind of man this single principle, and without any distinct susceptibility of experiencing joy, grief, anger, &c., these emotions will, in the circumstances supposed by him, he imagines, necessarily arise. On this statement I observe,

*First*, That of the principle itself no intelligible account has been given. What is "well-being?" Can any other conception be formed of it, than as a state in which the mind is in the enjoyment of feelings which have been rendered, by its very constitution, grateful to it? What is love to well-being, but love to those grateful feelings? Is it not, then, manifest that a state of well-being, supposes the mind to have been endowed with various susceptibilities of grateful feeling, and that the individual, who is the subject of this state, is possessed of objects adapted to develop these susceptibilities? What is that well-being which is previous to contentment, complacency, delight, and other happy emotions, and the love of which actually produces these emotions? Surely well-being *is* contentment, complacency, delight, &c. I do not, I

apprehend, express myself in terms of undeserved severity, when I say, that a system of philosophy, which commences by speaking of a state of well-being—or a grateful state of existence—as something which exists previously to all grateful feelings, and then proceeds to trace all these feelings to the natural and necessary influence of love to this state of well being, is radically absurd.

*Secondly,* I observe that, if a state of well-being could be conceived of as existing previously to the possession of grateful feelings, love to this state would not originate the emotions of complacency, delight, &c. which are supposed, by this system, to result from it. Contentment, complacency, &c. are states of mind produced by the possession of an object previously desired; the states of mind are in themselves delightful; but they exist only in consequence of a distinct susceptibility of experiencing them—or, in other words, because God has so formed the human mind, as that when the object to which we have referred is possessed, the feeling of contentment, or complacency, &c. immediately arises.

Had Dr. Cogan not embarrassed himself by attempting to trace all our emotions to this strange principle of love to well-being—had he recollected, that all our emotions arise in consequence of the existence of corresponding susceptibilities—and had he classified love, hatred, desire, aversion, &c. among our emotions, instead of representing them as the *causes* of those emotions, he might, perhaps, have presented us with an arrangement more worthy of adoption than that which is founded on their mere relation to time. This latter classification is, however, so simple, that, without hesitation, we follow Dr. Brown in adopting it.

## EMOTIONS.

### CLASS I.—*Comprehending those which are immediate, or involve no notion of time.*

In this class may be included,—cheerfulness in all its different gradations, melancholy, surprise, wonder, astonishment, languor, beauty, deformity, grandeur, sublimity, ludicrousness, moral approbation and disapprobation, love and hate, sympathy, pride and humility.

The possession of some of the susceptibilities implied in the foregoing terms, renders us capable subjects of moral government; and it is in the manner in which several of these emotions arise, and continue to be developed, that much of virtue and vice consists. But they are now to be considered rather "physiologically than ethically." Our business at present is chiefly to examine the *nature* of the mental affections enumerated above, that we may gain a more accurate knowledge of mind, as capable of experiencing them; though it may be proper, as we proceed, to point out, with reference to some of them at least, their moral character.

#### CHEERFULNESS.

With the nature of this emotion all are acquainted. Dr. Brown has described it as "a sort of perpetual gladness." It only approaches to perpetuity, however, in the young, and in some of the choicer spirits of our race, in whom it constitutes a kind of habit of mind. Individuals, whose mental temperature is rather grave than gay, and aged persons, generally speaking, enjoy not the constant sunshine of this delightful state of mind. It manifests, however, the

benevolence of our Maker, that he has rendered the human mind susceptible of the emotion; and the habitual want of it, when such is the case, is to be ascribed to human perversity, and to the infelicity of circumstances which that perversity has introduced. There are words of kindred import, such as contentment, satisfaction, complacency, gladness, joy, delight, &c., which some authors consider as the symbols of so many radically distinct emotions, excited by the idea of good in possession. The fact, however, seems to be, that the *emotion* denoted by all the words is the same,—that the *feelings* indicated by them, are modifications of the simple emotion of joy. The terms, however, may be properly enough retained to exhibit different degrees of the same mental affection—or to mark a distinction between the emotion, *in combination with the conception of its cause*, forming a complex state of mind, as in the case of complacency; *and without any such combination*, as in the case of cheerfulness. Contentment, satisfaction, gladness, joy, &c. are complex states of mind. When analyzed, the elements presented are—the simple emotion of joy—and the conception of the cause of that emotion. They differ from each other only in the circumstance, that the elementary emotion is more powerful in some than in others; rising, by regular gradations, from contentment to joy, and delight. Cheerfulness is the simple emotion itself—for we are frequently "cheerful without knowing why"—though the word denotes the emotion in its gentler state.

### MELANCHOLY.

Of this term, together with several kindred ones, the following account has been given. "The lowest

degree of painful feeling may be termed uneasiness. The word discontent is used when we are able, with some distinctness, to specify the cause of the evil suffered. Dissatisfaction is a higher feeling, of a painful nature. It supposes previous expectation, and present disappointment. Vexation arises from a variety of trifling and momentary troubles, which cross our wishes, and contribute to our disappointment. It appears to be the exact counterpart of gladness, and is greatly heightened and modified by surprise, and unexpectedness. It discovers itself by lively expressions of displeasure, and sometimes by violent affections of the animal part of our nature. Sorrow is the direct opposite of joy; and denotes a more permanent state of mind than what exists under the influence of the above-mentioned feelings. Grief, and sorrow, are nearly synonimous terms; only grief is more commonly applied to the first and more violent excitements of sorrow; and sorrow to the more settled and lasting affection of grief. Hence sorrow remains, when grief has subsided. Thus the death of a dear relative, or friend, may produce a paroxysm of grief, so violent, that even the term transport is sometimes applied to express its power; thus conveying the idea, that the mind is carried beyond itself by its force. In this instance, it is the exact counterpart of lively delight. The conception of the loss, however, thus producing violent grief, may become, by degrees, so chastened and modified, as to settle into sorrow. The external indications of this passion are sometimes extremely violent, and even, when subsided, they leave traces and marks of their influence on the animal frame, and on the habits of the mind. Objects that once excited pleasure, become invested with gloom; one class of associations predominates

over all the rest. In numerous cases, the imagination receives an amazing stimulus from the excitement of sorrow; and the power of memory becomes unusually vivid, and strong. Hence the loss is aggravated; the mind indulges its reveries of woe; and it sometimes happens that the grief is so long nourished—and one train of painful associations becomes so marked and predominant, as to suspend or derange the right use of the rational powers. There are occasionally produced, in some instances, the raging of madness, and, in others, the morbid sadness of melancholy. The passion of sorrow," adds this writer, " is peculiarly distinguished as being of a tacit uncommunicative nature. Unlike joy, it wishes not to excite kindred feelings in others; it is marked by silence; and, retiring into the scenes of privacy, it weeps alone. ' Peter went out to weep.' It is not till the passion of sorrow has subsided into an affection, that it becomes capable of what is called the luxury of grief. In this state, the communication of the feeling may be a source of gratification."

The preceding statements represent the words explained, as denoting the same radical emotion in different degrees, or as existing in combination with some other feeling. The radical emotion is grief; which constitutes, as Dr. Brown thinks, one of the elementary emotions. It is capable, like the qualities of material objects, of various degrees of " intension :" at one time it may be found in its elementary state; at others, in combination with some conception or notion, forming with it a complex state of mind—but the radical emotion is the same in all. And, since in classifying our emotions, we do not, on various accounts, regard them in their elementary principles, but in those complex conditions in which they

generally present themselves to our view, it follows that the same emotion, when in combination with a certain conception, and when it presents itself in its elementary state, may admit of being arranged differently. This is the case with Regret, and Melancholy, or sadness. In mere sadness there may be no notion of the cause of the emotion—we are melancholy we know not why; but in regret, the same emotion is combined with a conception of its cause—we must regret something. And, as the cause of regret must be a past event, regret is classed by Dr. Brown among our retrospective emotions. Whether this does not go far to prove that a more philosophic arrangement of our emotions than that which he adopts, and which is here followed on account of its simplicity, might have been suggested, I will not undertake to say.

Dr. Brown describes melancholy as "that state of mind which intervenes between the absolute affliction of some great calamity, and that peace which afterwards succeeds to it." This description supposes that time has an influence in softening violent grief into melancholy; an influence which has been remarked upon, as frequently as it has been observed; though I am not aware that any writer, besides Dr. Brown, has presented us with any statement which can claim the character of a philosophical explanation of the phænomenon. The amount of his statements is as follows: The grief is, at first, pure, unmixed grief. By the laws of suggestion, however, in consequence of which any simple feeling may be rendered complex, this grief becomes combined with other feelings produced by passing events, so that it partakes gradually less and less of the nature of that pure affliction which constituted the original sorrow; till at length it is so

much softened and diversified by repeated combinations, as scarcely to retain the same character, and to be rather sadness, or a sort of gentle tenderness, than affliction.

Further, with the original feeling, all surrounding objects are at first strongly associated, so that the sight of any one of them recalls that feeling, when the mind is momentarily diverted, by the ordinary laws of suggestion; that is, as we say, in popular phraseology, renews the grief. By degrees, however, these surrounding objects become associated with other feelings, which they recall more frequently than the original feeling, in consequence of one of the secondary laws of suggestion. Thus the melancholy is less frequently excited, because fewer objects now recall it, and it is, at the same time, gentler when it is renewed.*

### SURPRISE, WONDER, AND ASTONISHMENT.

The states of mind denoted by these words are denominated by Dr. Cogan, "Introductory Emotions." It did not appear to him possible to trace them to the influence of what he calls the leading principle of our nature, *viz.* love to well-being. They do not, accordingly, appear in his enumeration of the passions, &c.; but he has been constrained to station them in a position which is almost as singular as the very remarkable language he employs concerning them. "Being," says he, "a class of *emotions* in which distinct ideas of good or evil are not present to the mind, they may enlist themselves under either division;" *i.e.* under the division of passions and affections, which are excited by the idea of good—or of

* Vol. III. p. 47—51.

those which are awakened by the idea of evil. But if, when these emotions, as he calls them, arise, no ideas of good or evil are present to the mind, by which they may be excited; and, *à fortiori*, if emotions are not mental affections—if they are the effects produced by powerful excitements of mind upon the *body*, (the sense in which he avows his intention of using the term)—it is perfectly manifest that they ought not to be placed in either division. He proceeds, in his description of them, in the following indefinite manner: "They" (*i. e.* the Introductory Emotions, as he calls them) "are vivid impressions," (*query*, upon what?) "productive of effects," (on what?) "which, strictly speaking, neither belong to the passions nor affections; and yet their presence" (where?) "frequently constitutes the difference between an affection and a passion."* The reader must make what he can of this passage; to me it is unintelligible. Nor does his subsequent definition of Surprise throw any more light upon the subject. "Whatever presents itself," he tells us, "in a sudden and unexpected manner, makes a proportionably greater impression upon us; the first percussion will be more violent; and this circumstance," he adds, "will give peculiar energy *to the exciting cause*, whatever its peculiar complexion may be. A *strong impulse is given*, by the very mode of its appearance, previous to our being able to acquire a distinct knowledge of its nature. This *impulse* is the emotion," he adds, "we term Surprise."† I have marked, by italic characters, the words which throw ambiguity over the whole statement. An impulse is given, he states, and this impulse is surprise. *To what* does he mean, I ask, is the impulse given?

* P. 49. † P. 51.

The connexion would seem to intimate that his intention is to affirm that it is imparted to the *exciting cause of the affection.* But, if such be his meaning, it necessarily follows that surprise, on his system, is neither an affection of the mind, nor of the body, but increased power of impression in an external object. If he mean that the impulse is given to the mind, then it follows that emotion is not, as he affirms, the effect of strong internal feeling upon the *corporeal frame.* I cannot avoid suspecting that there was nothing definite in the Doctor's own conceptions on the subject. He seems to have had an obscure idea, that the qualities of novelty and unexpectedness must produce some distinct mental feeling; and yet, not knowing what to think of this feeling, nor how to classify it, he perhaps unconsciously abandons this idea in the course of his statements, and writes, not as though he considered surprise a distinct *mental feeling,* but the NOVELTY and UNEXPECTEDNESS of an event, giving to the feeling which the event is, in itself, adapted to produce, a greater degree of vividness. He frequently remarks upon the influence of these introductory emotions, as he calls them, in converting affections into passions. And he states it as highly probable, that "the essential and characteristic difference between a Passion and an Affection, depends upon the superaddition of surprise to the natural effect produced by the real or supposed quality of an object; that this emotion, conjoined with the specific nature of its exciting cause, is virtually the efficient cause of a passion; the percussion of surprise rendering the affection visible, by characteristic signs, correspondent with it specific nature."* I admit, that

* P. 190.

it is impossible to gather any thing with certainty from this statement; but it would appear to be the idea of the writer, that an object, in itself adapted to awaken a certain affection, produces, when it appears suddenly and unexpectedly, a more than ordinarily vigorous excitement of that affection. The mental feeling, in this case, is not different in kind from the ordinary instances of it, but in degree only; so that surprise is not a distinct mental feeling, but merely the novelty and unexpectedness of an event, imparting increased vividness to other feelings.

The reader is referred to what he says with reference to wonder and astonishment, in confirmation of this opinion; neither my limits nor my inclinations will permit me to follow statements, which appear to me at least so unusually indefinite, in a professedly philosophical work, any further.

The error that no distinct emotion, or mental feeling, is denoted by any of the terms to which we now refer, was committed also by Dr. Adam Smith. "Surprise," says this writer, "is not to be regarded as an original emotion, of a species distinct from all others. The violent and sudden change produced upon the mind, when an emotion of any kind is brought upon it, constitutes the whole nature of surprise;"* *i.e.* a sudden change from grief to joy, or from joy to grief, is surprise. We would ask here, what is this change? It is neither the grief nor the joy, but the cessation of one, and the commencement of the other. How then it can have happened, that the mere termination of grief, and the beginning of sorrow, could be regarded by Dr. Smith as *an emotion*, (for his language implies that surprise *is*

* *Vide* Essays on Philosophical Subjects, p. 6.

an emotion, though not an original one) is certainly adapted to produce in us that change which is thus singularly designated. "If there be any emotion," says Dr. Brown, "which is truly original, it really seems to me very difficult to discover one which could have a better claim to this distinction than surprise. It certainly is not involved in either of the successive perceptions, or conceptions, or feelings of any kind, the unusual successions of which appear to us surprising; and if it be not, even in the slightest degree, involved in either of them separately, it cannot be involved in the two, which contain nothing more, as successive, than they contained separately. When the two are regarded by the mind as objects, indeed, they may give rise to feelings which are not involved in themselves, and the emotion of surprise may be, or rather truly is, one of these secondary feelings; but the surprise is then an original emotion, distinct from the primary states of mind which gave birth to it, indeed, but do not constitute it. Sudden joy and sudden sorrow, even in their most violent extremes, might succeed each other reciprocally, in endless succession, without exciting surprise, if the mind had been unsusceptible of any other feelings than joy and sorrow. Surprise is evidently not joy,—it is as evidently not sorrow,—nor is it a combination of joy and sorrow;—it is surely, therefore, something different from both; and we can say with confidence, that before the mind can be astonished at the succession of the two feelings, it must have been rendered susceptible at least of a third feeling."*

If the statements of Dr. Smith are correct, why are not animals in general susceptible of surprise, and

* Vol. III. pp. 63-4.

wonder, and astonishment, as well as the human race, for they experience sudden transitions from joy to sorrow, and from sorrow to joy?

There is, then, we conceive, an original susceptibility of mind, of which brutes are destitute, rendering us capable of a specific emotion at the occurrence of any thing unexpected, new, vast, &c. To attempt to describe the feeling is absurd. All the simple feelings of our nature must be experienced in order to be known; nothing more can be done by us than to point out the circumstances in which they ordinarily arise. There is one question, however, to which a little attention must be devoted; *viz.* is the emotion, designated by the various words, surprise, wonder, and astonishment, strictly speaking, *one* emotion, or as different as the words by which it is denoted? The latter appears to be the more common opinion. It is supported by the weight of Dr. Smith's authority, although his statements, on this point, appear to be necessarily at variance with his doctrine, that surprise is not an original emotion. What is new and singular, he conceives to excite that feeling, or sentiment, as he calls it, which, in strict propriety, is termed Wonder; what is unexpected, that different feeling which is commonly called Surprise. "We wonder," says he, "at all extreme and uncommon objects—at all the rarer phænomena of nature—at meteors, comets, and eclipses—at singular plants and animals; and at every thing, in short, with which we have been before either little, or not at all acquainted; and we still wonder, though forewarned, of what we are to see. We are surprised," he continues, "at those things which we have seen often, but which we least of all expected to meet with in the place where we find them; we are surprised at the sudden appearance of

a friend, whom we have seen a thousand times, but whom we did not imagine that we were to see then."*

Some of my readers will be ready to imagine, it is possible that the preceding distinction is perfectly accurate, and that the point is established beyond controversy, that surprise, and wonder, are radically different emotions. And yet what does Dr. S. really prove more than that the same emotion may appear under different modifications; and that the law of custom, which regulates the use of words, directs us to employ the term Surprise, when exhibiting one of its modifications, and Wonder, when pointing out another? A certain quadruped is called a calf in one stage of its existence, and a cow in another; we cannot, accordingly, use the terms convertibly; so that, reasoning on Dr. Smith's principles, we ought to believe that the calf, and the cow, are totally different animals. The circumstance which misled Dr. Smith is one, the influence of which has been more than once adverted to,—he has attended more to the acceptation of terms, than to what takes place in the mind when we are said to feel surprise, or wonder, or astonishment.

The statements of Dr. Brown, on this subject, are especially worthy of attention. "When new and striking objects occur, or when familiar objects present themselves in unexpected situations, a certain emotion arises, to which we give the name of surprise, or astonishment, or wonder, but which, as an emotion, is the same, though different names may be given with distinctive propriety, *to this one emotion*—when combined, or not combined, with a process of rapid intellectual inquiry, or with other feelings of the same

* Philosophical Essays, p. 2.

class. When the emotion arises simply, it may be termed, and is more commonly termed, Surprise;—when the surprise, thus excited by the unexpected occurrence, leads us to dwell upon the object which excited it, and to consider in our minds what the circumstances may have been which have led to the appearance of the object, the surprise is more properly termed Wonder,—which, as we may dwell upon the object long, and consider the possibilities of many circumstances, that may have led to the unexpected introduction of it, is, of course, more lasting than the instant surprise which was only its first stage."*

The description given by this able writer of the circumstances in which the emotion of surprise, or wonder, arises, leads me to remark upon another question suggested by him; *viz.* whether the same events which excite wonder in us, produce the same emotions in the mind of an infant; for since every thing is new to an infant, those occurrences which are very remarkable to us, are not more remarkable to an infant, than common and every day events. Does the feeling of surprise attend then, in the case of infants, the perception of every object, and effect? With Dr. Brown, I think not. The feeling of surprise is manifestly inconsistent with a state of utter ignorance. It supposes, in the circumstances in which it arises, the knowledge of *other* circumstances, which were expected to occur; for there must be unexpectedness, as well as novelty, in events, or objects, which awaken surprise. Now as all expectation supposes previous experience, our knowledge of the future being derived from the past, it follows that infants who have no experience, cannot be the subjects of surprise.

* Vol. III. p. 57.

The moralist cannot pass from the consideration of this emotion, without noticing its importance to our safety and happiness. "It is in new circumstances that it is most necessary for us to be upon our guard; because, from their novelty, we cannot be aware of the effects that attend them, and require, therefore, more than usual caution, where foresight is impossible. But if new circumstances had not produced feelings peculiarly vivid, little regard might have been paid to them, and the evil, therefore, might have been suffered, before alarm was felt. Against this danger, nature has most providentially guarded us. We cannot feel surprise, without a more than ordinary interest in the objects which may have excited this emotion, and a consequent tendency to pause, till their properties have become, in some degree, known to us. Our astonishment may, therefore, be considered as a voice from that Almighty goodness, which constantly protects us, that, in circumstances in which inattention might be perilous, whispers, or almost cries to us, Beware!"*

### LANGUOR.

The term Languor is used to designate that mental weariness which all have felt, and, therefore, all understand, that arises from "a long continuance of one unvaried object, or from a succession of objects so nearly similar, as scarcely to appear varied." Such is the constitution of the mind, that objects originally pleasing, if forced upon our view for a long period of time, gradually cease to interest, and become at length actually painful; while those which were at first displeasing, are rendered more tiresome and offensive, by the same means.

* Brown, Vol. III. p. 65.

In imparting to the human mind the susceptibility of experiencing this emotion, the great Being who created it, has supplied us with a powerful stimulus to that state of action for which we are formed. The feeling of languor, of which we now speak, "is to the mind," says Dr. Brown, "what the corresponding pain of hnnger is to our bodily health. It gives an additional excitement even to the active; and to far the greater number of mankind, it is, perhaps, the only excitement which could rouse them, from the sloth of ease, to those exertions, by which their intellectual and moral powers are, in some degree at least, more invigorated;—or by which, notwithstanding all their indifference to the welfare of others, they are forced to become the unintentional benefactors of that society, to which otherwise they might not have given the labours of a single solitary exertion, or even of a single thought."*

## BEAUTY.

On this subject, with reference to which so much has been written, it will probably most contribute to the satisfaction of the reader, to give an extended outline of the views of one of our most distinguished writers, and to compare with them the statements of others who have attained great celebrity, endeavouring to hold the critical balance with a steady and an impartial hand. For various reasons I select the statements of Dr. Brown.

The term Beauty, according to this writer, denotes an *emotion*, not a sensation. It is not the *direct* result, that is, of the influence of any thing external, upon an organ of sense; it is a feeling *subsequent* to

* Vol. III. p. 70.

the perception, or conception, of the object termed beautiful; and, in this respect, is similar to the emotion of hope, or fear, which does not arise in consequence of the possession of the sensitive powers merely, but of a susceptibility of mind which is enjoyed in addition to them. The bearing of this statement, in which I entirely agree with Dr. Brown, on some of the controverted points with reference to beauty, will be afterwards seen.

What we thus properly term, however, the emotion of beauty, is not one feeling of our mind, but many feelings, differing widely, as in the case of colours, among themselves, yet sufficiently analogous to justify us in comprehending them under the same general term.

The term Beauty necessarily denotes a pleasing emotion; for it is found, when analyzed, to be a modification of joy, one of the elementary feelings to which our emotions are reducible. All objects which agree in exciting this pleasing emotion, we denominate beautiful, and for that reason; as we call a certain substance sweet, which produces the sensation of sweetness. Beauty, like sweetness, is an affection of mind, and of mind only. It cannot exist in material objects. It is not an external entity; and, therefore, to inquire into a supposed common quality, to which we give the name of beautiful, in the all but infinite variety of objects which excite the emotion, is absurd. The absurdity, however, has been committed; and by some, beauty is said to be a waving line; by others, a combination of certain physical qualities, &c.; as if, says Dr. Brown, beauty were any thing in itself, and were not merely a general name for all those pleasing emotions, which forms, colours, sounds, motions, &c. produce.

This tendency of the mind to regard beauty as some actual and external essence, which is to be found in every object that awakens the emotion, is accounted for by a fact, to the establishment of which Dr. Brown devotes a very considerable part of his discussion upon the subject; *viz.* the general tendency of the mind to transfer its feelings to the objects which produce them. The delight which the beautiful object yields we transfer to it, combining it, at least partially, with our very conception of the object as beautiful. When we come, indeed, to philosophize on the subject, we should say, that external beauty is simply that which excites a certain delightful emotion; but when the beautiful object is before us, and we feel its influence, we then conceive it to contain in it the very delight which we feel; we consider some permanent delight as embodied in it, so that it would remain beautiful though no eye were ever to behold it. A similar transfer takes place with regard to odours and tastes, and especially colours. What is fragrance or colour in a rose? Nothing surely resembling our sensations. We admit at once, when questioned on the subject, that they are only the unknown causes of certain well-known sensations. Yet when the sensations are actually experienced, we forget this; we transfer what we feel to the rose; we are apt *then* to suppose that a charm, somewhat resembling our sensation of fragrance, floats around the flower itself, and exists there independently of our feeling. And with regard to colour especially, Dr. Brown says it is impossible for us to look on what we philosophically regard as the unknown causes of our sensations, without blending with them the very sensations which they awaken, and seeing, therefore, in them the very greenness and redness which are feelings of our minds.

This tendency to spiritualize matter, by regarding it, at least momentarily, as the subject of feelings which can only exist in the mind, was noticed long ago by D'Alembert. "The bias," says he, "we acquire in consequence of habits contracted in infancy, to refer to a substance material and divisible, what really belongs to a substance spiritual and simple, is a thing well worthy of the attention of metaphysicians. Nothing," he adds, "is perhaps more extraordinary, in the operations of mind, than to see it transport its sensations out of itself, and to spread them, as it were, over a substance to which they cannot possibly belong." "It would be difficult," says Mr. Stewart, when quoting these words, "to state the fact in terms more brief, precise, and perspicuous." I subscribe to this judgment of Mr. Stewart, but not to the opinion of D'Alembert, that the fact in question is most wonderful. Nothing, on the contrary, appears to me more natural than to regard the cause, as bearing some resemblance to the effect; and the transference of colour to external objects, is only a particular manifestation of this natural tendency.

"Now," says Dr. Brown, "if this be the case with reference to smells, tastes, and colours, I trust it will not appear too bold an assertion to say that the agreeable emotions which certain objects excite in us, are capable of being, in our conceptions, combined with the very notion of the objects themselves; and that we term such objects beautiful, by combining, in our notions of them, the delight which we feel, as we term them green, blue, crimson, by combining with them, our feelings of colour. A beautiful object, as felt by us, is an object on which we have diffused the delightful feeling of our own mind. Though no eye were to behold what is beautiful, we cannot but imagine that

a certain delight would for ever be flowing around it; as we cannot but imagine, in like manner, that the loveliest flower of the wilderness, which buds and withers unmarked, is blooming with the same delightful hues, which our vision would give to it,—and surrounded with that sweetness of fragrance, which, in itself, is but a number of exhaled particles, that are sweetness only in the sentient mind."

Thus beauty, according to Dr. Brown, is an emotion that is pleasing, and it is an emotion which we diffuse and combine with our conception of the object that may have excited it; and these two circumstances, he adds—" the pleasing nature of the emotion itself, and the identification of it with the object that excites it,—are the only circumstances that are essential to it in all its varieties."

The transference, however, of this pleasing emotion to the object, implies its previous existence; and the recollection of this self-evident truth suggests the important inquiries, How does it come to pass, that certain objects *only* excite this pleasing emotion, and from whence do they derive their power to produce it?

These questions, or rather this question, for we have here in reality only one question, has greatly divided the philosophical world; some maintaining, on the one hand, that many objects have primarily and absolutely the power of awakening the emotion of beauty; while others contend, on the other hand, that they derive it exclusively from association.

Dr. Brown, and Mr. Payne Knight, arrange themselves in the former class. They both appeal to the fact—for I am disposed to concede that it is a fact—that there are certain colours, and certain distributions of colours, which seem naturally to delight the child and the savage; and the former seems to imagine,

without sufficient reason as it appears to me, that the smile of the mother, like the cry of the parent hen, calling her brood to feast upon the discovered corn, may be an instinctive sign of pleasure, of which a delightful emotion may be the immediate consequence. Those who have more knowledge of children than it is probable Dr. Brown possessed, will scarcely be able to persuade themselves, that infants are able to unlock the meaning of a smile, or a frown, till experience has supplied them with the key.

The Rev. Mr. Alison, on the other hand, and Mr. Jeffrey, editor of the Edinburgh Review,* resolve the beauty of all external objects into association, or suggestion. With certain objects, certain agreeable feelings—feelings received by means of some of the ordinary susceptibilities of the mind—have co-existed; the perception, or conception of these objects will, by the ordinary laws of suggestion, recall these feelings. In the opinion, therefore, of both these writers, beauty is not an inherent property, or quality, of external objects; it does not depend upon any particular configuration of their parts, or proportions, or colours; but it is the power they possess of recalling those agreeable feelings "of which they have been the accompaniments, or with which they have been associated in our imagination, by any other more casual bond of connexion."

There is, however, a considerable difference of opinion between these writers on one point of importance. Mr. Alison, to account for the vividness of the emotion of beauty, seems to think it necessary to suppose, that the beautiful object suggests a long train of pleasing images, each contributing its own

* *Vide* article *Beauty*, Supplement to the Encyc. Brit.

share to the enjoyment, and producing altogether a large amount of delight. Mr. Jeffrey admits that such a train of thought may arise, but maintains that it is not necessary to the perception of beauty, which, he says, "is in most cases instantaneous, and as immediate as the perception of the external qualities of the object to which it is ascribed." If the appeal be made to experience, there can be little doubt that Mr. Alison will be found to be in error here. The emotion of beauty does not gradually rise in vividness, as Mr. Alison represents. There is not the pouring in of one little streamlet of joy after another, but the tide of delight is at once full. And it is a correct, and an important remark, that "the more intense the feeling of beauty is, the less is the tendency of the mind to pass from the delightful object which fills the heart, as it fills the eyes, to images of distant analogy."

The preceding statements tend to shew the fallacy of the following objection against the general views of Messrs. Alison and Jeffrey. "Any theory respecting the beautiful which professes to explain our agreeable impressions by the principle of association alone, must be radically erroneous. It involves," as Mr. Stewart has justly and acutely remarked, "a manifest absurdity. Unless some perceptions be supposed which are originally pleasing, there is nothing on which the associating principle can act. There can be no accumulation without a capital."* If, with the above passage, be compared the following statement of Dr. Brown, in which he describes, with singular felicity, the manner in which association may become the source of beauty, the reader will be at no loss to

* *Vide* Christian Observer, 1812.

see that, on this subject at least, there may be accumulation without capital—or that agreeable feelings may become associated with objects which yield no *direct* pleasure. "The perception of an object (*i.e. any* object) has originally co-existed with a certain pleasure,—a pleasure which, perhaps, may have frequently recurred together with the perception,—and which thus forms with it in the mind one complex feeling,* that is instantly recalled by the mere perception of the object, in its subsequent recurrences. With this complex state, so recalled, other accidental pleasures may afterwards co-exist in like manner, and form a more complex delight; but a delight which is still, when felt, one momentary state of mind, capable of being instantly recalled by the perception of the object, as much as the simpler delight in the earlier stage. The embellishing influence of association may thus be progressive in various stages; because new accessions of pleasure are continually rendering more complex the delight that is afterwards to be suggested; but that which is suggested in the later stages, though the result of a progress, is, in itself, in each subsequent perception of the object which it embellishes, *immediate*. We spread the charm over the object with the same rapidity with which we spread over it the colours which it seems to beam upon us.†" He states, also, that "this pleasure may be recalled, not only by the object with which it originally co-existed, but by an object similar, and analogous to it; which thus, even when we first gaze upon it, may appear to have a sort of original loveliness, which, but for the rapid and unperceived suggestion, it would not have possessed. One degree of beauty is thus

* *Vide* p. 31. † Vol. III. pp. 168-9.

acquired by every object similar to that which has been a source to us of any primary pleasure."

In attempting to guide the reader, in his efforts to ascertain where the truth lies, amidst these conflicting statements, I would request him to notice,

*First,* the exceedingly narrow basis on which Dr. Brown builds his doctrine of the original beauty of material objects. That basis, as we have seen, is the fact that certain colours, and sounds, seem naturally more agreeable to children, and savages, than others. This is the exclusive basis; for the statement which seems to give, though with great hesitation, native beauty to the mother's smile, I must be permitted, with all deference to Dr. Brown, to throw out of the question. Mr. Jeffrey seems to doubt the correctness of the statements of Dr. Brown; with little reason, however, I apprehend. I concede at once the alleged fact, that some colours delight infants and savages, who, in this respect are infants, more than others; but Dr. Brown has to prove that this delight is the *emotion* of beauty, and not *a mere pleasure of sense.* It is not probable that all colours, any more than all odours, yield naturally the same measure of sensitive enjoyment. The *sensation* of blackness, may not be equally grateful with the *sensation* of redness. Children may, accordingly, and I apprehend actually do, prefer colours glaring and strong, merely because they stimulate more powerfully, and so are, as mere sensations, more pleasing than others. The foundation, therefore, on which Dr. Brown erects his argument, must be held to be not merely narrow, but insecure, till he has proved that the delight of children, &c. is not mere sensitive delight. He attempts to shew that this cannot be the case, inasmuch as the sensitive feelings are now, as he alleges,

what they were in infancy; while the colours, and dispositions of colours, which delight the child, are not those which delight us. But why must they be the same now as they were in infancy? We should little have expected this assertion from a writer who maintains, that it is in the power of habit, not merely to *modify* original sensations, but absolutely to reverse them—to render that pleasant which was originally disagreeable.* Besides, he forgets the obvious fact, that to us association has embellished some colours more than others; so that, without supposing any modification of the original sensation, this embellishment may turn the scale in favour of those colours which, as the mere sources of sensitive delight, are less valuable than others.

There is, on this point, considerable difference of opinion between Dr. Brown and Mr. Payne Knight. They agree in thinking that certain colours, and sounds, yield naturally more pleasure than others. The latter, however, conceives that this pleasure is a *sensation;* so that, according to his statements, our original and natural emotions of beauty, are of the same order of feelings with the fragrance of a rose, or the flavour of a peach. Dr. Brown, as we have seen, denies this. They are not, he thinks, external but internal affections; not sensations, but emotions; which may succeed sensations, or not, he says, according to circumstances. The difficulties which both opinions have to encounter, will be more fully considered afterwards.

*Secondly,* I would request the reader to consider the comparatively small number of our emotions of beauty which are considered, either by Dr. Brown,

* Vol. III. p. 139.

or Mr. Payne Knight, as resulting from an original tendency of mind to this feeling. Dr. Brown expressly says, "it is only a small part of this order of emotions, which we can ascribe to such a source, and these, as I conceive, of very humble value, in relation to other more important emotions of this order, which are truly *the production of associations of various kinds.*"* Mr. Payne Knight, also, agrees with Mr. Alison in holding the most important, and, indeed, the only considerable part of beauty, to depend upon association, and has illustrated this opinion with a great variety of just and original observations.

These concessions enable us to decide upon the correctness of Dr. Brown's assertion, that the burden of proof does not rest with the believers, but with the deniers of original beauty—an assertion that appears to me at variance with the whole spirit of his philosophy, which teaches us not to multiply powers unnecessarily. Admitting, as he does, that *most* of our emotions of beauty are the result of association, it follows that he ought not to call in the aid of an original susceptibility to account for *any*, unless he is able to shew that they cannot spring from association. Necessity only, on his principles, will justify the supposition of original emotions of beauty; *i.e.* the *onus probandi* rests upon the *believers* in original beauty. The system of Dr. Brown, by maintaining that the superior delights which some colours afford children is not a sensation, but an emotion of beauty, appears to me entangled in a difficulty, which does not encumber the statements of Mr. Payne Knight. An emotion, according to the system of Dr. Brown, is a feeling *sui generis*—of a totally different order

* Vol. III. pp. 143-4.

from a sensation. An original emotion of beauty differs, then, generically from a sensation; but an emotion of beauty, the result of association, may be nothing more than a reflected, or a recalled sensation—the revival, though in a fainter degree, of a former sensitive affection; so that our emotions of beauty may comprehend two distinct classes of feelings.

*Thirdly,* I would call the attention of the reader to the inquiry, whether original emotions of beauty do not necessarily suppose that some distinct quality, to which we may give the name of beauty, exists in external objects. This, as we have seen, is denied by Dr. Brown. Beauty is not, he says, any thing which exists in objects, and permanent, therefore, as the objects in which it is falsely supposed to exist. Now, if all beauty be the result of association, the truth of these statements is apparent. But, if there be objects, as he maintains, which excite originally, without any previous association, the emotions of beauty, I do not see how the consistency of these statements can be maintained. Doubtless there is no beauty like what we feel, and transfer, in the objects which awaken the emotion, as there is nothing in the rose which resembles our sensations of fragrance, and of sight. But as the delightful feeling of beauty must be *excited,* before it can be reflected upon the object, and as that feeling cannot be excited without a cause, it seems to follow, as a necessary consequence, either that the beautiful object must have some permanent quality which awakens the emotion, or that it must derive its power to excite it from association. Our sensations of smell, taste, colour, &c. would not exist, if there were no cause of the feeling in external objects, though we know not what that cause is. In like manner, the emotions of beauty, which Dr. Brown

considers original, could not arise without a cause. And if there be a cause of the emotions in external objects—a cause which is not to be ascribed to association—*that cause is beauty in the objects,* as the cause of fragrance in a rose, is the fragrance of the rose. If there be original emotions of beauty, then, as it appears to me, external objects must have native beauty.

*Fourthly,* I would request the reader to observe the difficulties with which the notion of original emotions of beauty is embarrassed. How is it possible to reconcile, with this notion, the various, and even opposite, tastes of men? Our sensitive feelings are natural, and hence they are generally uniform. What is sweet, bitter, tasteless, red, scarlet or black, to one man, is so to another; and yet though we have, as it is contended, original emotions of beauty, there is amongst different individuals, great diversity, and even direct contrariety here. Where one sees beauty, another sees none,—nay, recognises, it may be, hideous deformity. A Chinese lover would see no attractions in a belle of London, or Paris; and a Bond-street exquisite would discover nothing but deformity in the Venus of the Hottentots. "A little distance in time produces the same effects, as distance in place;—the gardens, the furniture, the dress, which appeared beautiful in the eyes of our grandfathers, are odious and ridiculous in ours. Nay, the difference of rank, education, or employments, gives rise to the same difference of sensation. The little shopkeeper sees a beauty in his road-side box, and in the staring tile roof, wooden lions, and clipped box-wood, which strike horror into the soul of the student of the picturesque,—while *he* is transported in surveying the fragments of ancient sculpture, which are nothing but ugly masses

of mouldering stones in the judgment of the admirer of neatness."*

If our emotions of beauty are the result of association, all this is easily explained; but if even only a small portion of their number is the result of an original power, or susceptibility, how is the fact to be accounted for? And, if we are to suppose, with Mr. Payne Knight, that original emotions of beauty are in fact sensitive affections, the difficulty of explaining it abundantly increases. How does it happen that these particular sensations are susceptible of a change, which no other sensations undergo? What other organic feelings are so frequently reversed, or obliterated? And more especially, what other organic feeling is so powerfully affected by the principle of suggestion? When did association change the taste of a peach, or the colour of a rose? The difficulty which thus presses upon the doctrine of original beauty, Dr. Brown endeavours to obviate, by stating, as we have seen, that beauty is not a sensation, but an emotion. He admits that, if it were the result of our organic powers, or even of an internal sense, which, like our other senses, must force upon the mind constantly, or almost constantly, a particular feeling, when a particular object is present, there would not be this amazing diversity in the feelings of beauty. But emotions, he says, are capable of being modified to a much greater extent than sensations. He refers particularly to the emotion of Desire, in illustration and confirmation of his sentiments. No one, he argues, will contend that all objects are naturally equally desirable—or rather, that there are none which, prior to all pleasing associations, awaken the feeling of desire;

* Supplement to Encyclopædia Britannica—article *Beauty*, p. 173.

and yet circumstances may vanquish, and even invert this tendency. "In all ages," he continues, "the race of mankind are born with certain susceptibilities, which, if circumstances were not different, would lead them, as one great multitude, to form very nearly the same wishes; but the difference of circumstances produces a corresponding diversity of passions, that scarcely seems to flow from the same source. In like manner, the race of mankind, considered as a great multitude, might be, in all ages, endowed with the same susceptibilities of the emotion of beauty, which would lead them, upon the whole, to find the same pleasure in the contemplation of the same objects;—if different circumstances did not produce views of utility, and associations of various sorts, that diversify the emotion itself."*

I cannot fully reply to this statement now, because it involves what I cannot but consider a mistake with respect to the feeling called Desire, into which I must not at present enter. It manifestly supposes that there are objects which originally, and, as it were, instinctively—without any previous conception of them as good—awaken the feeling of desire, or there would not be a fair parallel between them, and original emotions of beauty. This doctrine, with respect to desire, I do not admit. But at present, all I can say in reply to this statement of Dr. Brown is, that there is not, by any means, the same diversity in the desires, as in the tastes of men. The former may be accounted for by the influence of modifying circumstances; it does not appear to me that the latter can.

*Fifthly,* I would request the reader to observe how easily our emotions of beauty received from external

* Vol. III. p. 127.

objects, may be shewn to arise from association. "A young and beautiful countenance charms us, and we are apt to imagine, that the forms and colours which it displays, would produce the same effect upon us, independently of association. It is manifest, however, that what we admire is not a combination of forms and colours, which could never excite any mental emotion; but a collection of signs and tokens of certain mental feelings and affections, which are universally recognized as the proper objects of love and sympathy. It is the youth, and health, and innocence, and gaiety, and sensibility, and delicacy, and vivacity, indicated by these signs, that awaken the emotion of beauty; and had they been indicative of opposite qualities,—had the smile that now enchants us, been attached by nature to guilt and malignity—or the blush which expresses delicacy, been united with brutal passions,—it cannot be doubted, that our emotions would be exactly the reverse of what they are. Mr. Knight himself thinks it entirely owing to these associations, that we prefer the tame smoothness, and comparatively poor colours of a youthful face, to the richly fretted and variegated countenance of a pimpled drunkard."*

The same writer proceeds to shew in what manner association gives beauty to inanimate objects. A common English landscape is beautiful; but its beauty consists in the picture of human happiness that is presented to our imagination and affections—in the visible and cheerful signs of comfort and contented and peaceful enjoyment. Spring is beautiful; it is associated with the hope of approaching abundance. Autumn is beautiful; it is the season when this abundance appears in a state of maturity. The blue

* Article *Beauty*, p. 182.

sky, by day, is beautiful; it is associated with all the comforts of fine weather; and hence the sky, in the evening twilight, though of a different colour, is equally beautiful. Bodies divested of corners and angles, are generally more beautiful than others: Who can doubt that their beauty is derived from association with pleasant sensations of touch?

The reader, who has opportunity, cannot fail to be exceedingly delighted to travel with Mr. Jeffrey through the whole of his illustrations; I cannot even advert to them. There is, however, one statement in support of his general doctrine concerning beauty, derived from the structure of language, which I must quote for the benefit of those who may not have access to the work in which it is contained. "It is very remarkable that while almost all the words by which the affections of mind are expressed, seem to have been borrowed originally from the qualities of matter, the epithets by which we learn afterwards to distinguish such material objects as are felt to be sublime or beautiful, are all of them epithets that had been previously appropriated to express some quality or emotion of mind. Colours are said to be gay or grave; motions to be lively, or deliberate, or capricious; forms to be delicate or modest; sounds to be animated or mournful; prospects to be cheerful or melancholy; rocks to be bold, waters to be tranquil, and a thousand other phrases of the same import; all indicating, most unequivocally, the sources from which our interest in matter is derived, and proving that it is necessary, in all cases, to confer mind and feeling upon it, before it can be conceived as either sublime, or beautiful."* Beauty is not then a quality in external objects, but

* P. 188.

the reflection of emotions, excited by the feelings, or condition of sentient beings.

But if all our emotions of beauty, derived from external objects, are the result of association, how does it happen, it will perhaps be inquired, that there should be so remarkable a degree of uniformity of taste among well-educated men? Considering the various circumstances in which they are placed, the point of difficulty, it may be said, is to account not for diversity, but partial similarity and identity, in their emotions of beauty. The following answer to the question is given by Dr. Brown. "The term Beauty is a general term; it is applied to all those objects which are adapted to produce the same general emotion. And in our inquiries what are the objects which possess this adaptation, we observe not merely what gives delight to ourselves, but what gives delight also to the greater number of the cultivated minds around us; and what might be capricious in one mind, is thus tempered by the result of more general associations in the many. In this manner we form a general standard of beauty—a relative notion of fitness to excite a certain amount of delight—which seems to be for ever in our mind to direct us, according to which, we fix at some precise degree the varying beauty of the moment."*

The preceding statement illustrates very admirably the manner in which a high degree of critical taste is acquired, understanding by the word taste here, an intellectual perception, rather than a feeling; but it does not appear to me to throw any light upon the question, "how it happens that all men, though placed in infinitely diversified circumstances, should experience

* Pp. 169-70.

*emotions* of beauty from the same objects?" The true answer seems to be, that though there are associations peculiar to the man, there are also associations common to the species. It is not one man who associates the pleasures of fine weather with the blue appearance of the sky; all men do it. The sky, accordingly, is not beautiful to one, but to all men.

Finally, the scheme which resolves all external beauty into association or suggestion, is recommended by several important considerations, at which I shall briefly glance.

It will explain, I conceive, all the phænomena of beauty. Dr. Brown does not specify a single instance of the emotion which he will venture to say cannot be ascribed to the suggesting principle. The amount of his statement is, that there are some which *may* arise from an original tendency of mind; or, at the utmost, which do thus arise.

It effectually prevents the necessity of inquiring concerning the quality, in external objects, which excites the emotion—an inquiry which, in consequence of the infinite diversity of objects by which the emotion is produced, would throw us into interminable difficulties. Dr. Brown's system, as we have seen, does not prevent this necessity. If there be original emotions of beauty, there must be *something* in the objects, by which the emotion is awakened, to produce it; or why do not all objects excite it? The question then naturally and necessarily arises, "What is that something?—or, in other words, What is Beauty? But if association be the source of beauty, all external objects are beautiful, with which interesting associations have been formed; and their power to awaken that pleasurable feeling which constitutes the emotion, is their beauty.

It gets rid of all the mystery which has been thrown over the subject, by the supposition of a peculiar sense or faculty given us for the express purpose of perceiving beauty; and shews us that what is called the faculty of taste, is either the knowledge, gathered from observation and experience, of what will produce generally the emotions of beauty; or the power of deriving pleasure from certain objects, with which interesting associations have been formed by those who are regarded as the most polished and refined of our species—a power which is gained by subjecting the mind to that discipline, which will lead to the formation of similar associations.

### SUBLIMITY.

Sublimity, considered as a feeling of the mind, admits not of definition; regarded as existing in the external object, it is that which fits it to awaken the emotion; a sublime object is one which produces the impression of sublimity.

As it has been observed in relation to beauty, there can be nothing resembling our emotion of sublimity, in the outward and material object, by which it is awakened. Yet, as in the case of beauty and of colour, the feeling may be transported out of the mind, and embodied in the object, "which, accordingly, seems to bear about with it that awful sublimity which exists nowhere but in our own consciousness."

By most writers on this subject, sublimity has been represented not merely as something radically different from beauty, but actually opposed to it. This sentiment has to encounter the high authority of Messrs. Jeffery, and Stewart, and Dr. Brown. The latter tells us that the kindred emotions of beauty and sublimity, shadow into one another—that they are merely

different parts of a series of emotions, gradually rising from the faintest beauty, to the vastest sublimity. To the lower part of this series we give the name of Beauty,—to the higher, the name of Sublimity,—and to the intermediate class, we might, he thinks, give that of Grandeur;—and, having thus denominated them, we are, he says, apt to imagine that we have three classes of emotions, widely differing from each other, though the invention of the terms to which we have referred, cannot manifestly alter the nature of the feelings they are employed to designate.

I have more doubt of the justness of the conclusion than of the premises here. The prismatic colours shade into one another, so that it is impossible to say where one terminates and another commences; but does it follow from hence that red, orange, green, blue, &c. are radically the same? In like manner, the sensation of genial warmth gradually rises, it may be, into that of intolerable heat; but should we be safe in concluding, from this circumstance, that there is no difference between pleasure and pain? There is, also, another consideration which serves to throw some doubt over this opinion of Dr. Brown. If there is no difference between the emotions of beauty and sublimity—if the latter are to be regarded as the former, in the superlative degree—it would seem to follow as a necessary consequence, that an abatement of sublimity would bring us down, so to speak, to beauty. This is, however, contrary to fact, according to the statements of Dr. Brown himself. "So far is it," he says, "from being indispensible to sublimity, that beauty should be the characteristic of the same circumstance, in a less degree, that, in many instances, what is absolutely the reverse of beautiful, becomes sublime, by the exclusion of every thing that could excite of

itself that delightful but gentle emotion. A slight degree of barren dreariness in any country through which we pass, produces only feelings that are disagreeable; a wide extent of desolation, when the eye can see no verdure as far as it can reach, but only rocks that rise at irregular intervals, through the sandy waste, has a sort of savage sublimity, which we almost delight to contemplate."*

That Dr. Brown has correctly and beautifully stated the fact, there is no doubt; but how does it harmonize with his statement, that sublimity is a class of feelings not essentially different from beauty? There appears, at least, to be an incongruity almost as great, between the two passages, as if it should be said that the way to render a man perfect in benevolence, is to strip him of every degree of kindness. If there be no radical difference between beauty and sublimity, there can be no sublimity without beauty, as there cannot be the superlative whitest, without the quality of whiteness itself; in some cases, however, he says, the emotion of beauty does not intermingle with the compound feeling of sublimity. It is more difficult, also, to maintain Dr. Brown's consistency, because he does not admit that the emotion of sublimity, in the case referred to, is the result of association. Those who trace it to this latter source, find no difficulty in accounting for the fact. A wide extent of desolation suggests, either directly, or by analogy, the notion of vast power, which a slight degree of barrenness would not; hence its sublimity.

As in the case of beauty, Dr. Brown maintains, that many external objects excite, independently of association, the emotions of sublimity. "We must not

* Pp. 185-6.

suppose," he says, "that, but for the accident of some mental association, the immensity of space would be considered by us with the same indifference as a single atom,—or the whole tempest of surges, in the seemingly boundless world of waters, with as little emotion as the shallow pool, that may chance to be dimpling before our eyes."

This opinion concerning original emotions of sublimity, is held in connexion with the assertion, that there is no sublimity in objects;—an error, as it appears to me at least, similar to that which was noticed with reference to beauty, and the influence of which may be traced in several parts of Dr. Brown's philosophy. I notice it more fully than I should have done, on that account. If by denying sublimity to those objects which awaken the emotion without the aid of association, Dr. Brown means no more than that nothing resembling our feeling is to be found in them, he is doubtless right; but in that case he sets himself to deny what no one has ever thought of maintaining. If he intends to affirm, that the objects, by which the emotion is excited, contain *nothing* in them to awaken it, he contradicts his own affirmation, that the feeling of sublimity cannot arise without a cause. If he admits that the objects in question contain some property, or quality, not possessed by others, from which the emotion results, then that property is sublimity in them; as colour in an orange is that unknown property from whence results the sensation. If Dr. Brown held that the emotion of sublimity is the result of association, he might consistently deny sublimity to things external. In that case, it would be perfectly correct to say that it is the mind which gives them their sublimity. But, on his system, even if we grant that, at a second stage

of the business, the mind transfers something to the object, it is beyond all question that, in the first stage, the object transfers something to the mind—the object must give the mind sublimity, before the mind can give sublimity to the object. And if *some objects only* give sublimity to the mind, it surely is not an unnecessary, much less an absurd inquiry, "What are these objects?" or, "What is the quality in them by which the emotion is produced?" Would Dr. Brown say, that to inquire into the cause of colour in bodies, however profitless such inquiry might be, would be to renew all the absurdities of the *a parte rei?* Why then should any speculation concerning beauty or sublimity in objects, be thus characterised, if there be something in objects which fits them to awaken the emotions of beauty and sublimity?

With Messrs. Alison and Jeffrey, I regard the feeling of sublimity, when excited by material objects, as the result of association. Nothing can be more sublime than the sound of thunder. We mistake the rumbling of a cart, at a distance, for thunder. The nicest ear cannot detect any difference between the two sounds; they are equally sublime, till we learn that we have been mistaken in the cause of the latter sound; all feeling of sublimity vanishes with the information. "What is it," says Mr. Alison, "that constitutes that emotion of sublime delight, which every man of common sensibility feels upon the first prospect of Rome?"—"It is ancient Rome which fills his imagination. It is the country of Cæsar, and Cicero, and Virgil, which is before him. It is the mistress of the world which he sees, and who seems to him to rise again from her tomb, to give laws to the universe."—"Take from him these associations, conceal

from him that it is Rome that he sees, and how different would be his emotions!"

I agree with Dr. Brown, that the quality or property, on the presence of which the emotions of sublimity arise, is vastness; but the question is, "Do the emotions directly flow from the perception of this quality, as the sensation of fragrance is the direct result of the contact of certain particles, and the olfactory nerve,—or are they excited through the medium of those conceptions of power, or wisdom, which the view of the quality suggests?" I cannot but regard the last member of the preceding question as exhibiting the real fact of the case. If any thing stupendous in the material world could be contemplated without suggesting the notion of greatness of power, or wisdom, it would possess, I imagine, no sublimity. Mountains piled upon mountains, precipices overhanging precipices—the torrent rushing over the verge of the rock worn smooth by its constant action, and thundering as it plunges into the abyss below—and the hurricane, annihilating the beauty over which it sweeps, and enabling us to track its course by the desolation which it leaves behind it, owe their grandeur to a lively conception of the energy of that power which called them into being, and which urges them forwards in their impetuous and resistless career. Hence the rumbling of a cart loses its sublimity, when it ceases to be mistaken for thunder. Our knowledge of the cause of the sound, breaks the association between it, and the conception of power which it had awakened, and accordingly it is sublime no longer.

It is, then, we think, the conception of power and wisdom, however the conception may be introduced into the mind, that awakens the emotion of sublimity. Whatever, therefore, "is vast in the material world—

whatever is supremely comprehensive in intellect—whatever in morals implies virtuous affections, or passions, far removed beyond the ordinary level of humanity, or even guilt itself, that is ennobled, in some measure, by the fearlessness of its darings, or the magnitude of the ends to which it has had the boldness to aspire—these, and various other objects, in matter and mind, produce the vivid feelings of sublimity." On this account, the words of inspiration, so frequently appealed to, exhibiting this universe rising into being, at the creating fiat, are sublime in the highest degree. The conduct of the soldier, referred to by Dr. Brown, who, during a famine, shared, for a long period of time, his scanty allowance with his comrade, whose enmity he had formerly experienced, exhibits *great* virtue; the action, accordingly, is not heroic merely, it is sublime. The act of our Redeemer, in giving himself for us, when we were enemies, ungodly, &c., is hence, also, encircled with a splendour of moral sublimity, which eclipses all inferior excellence; it exhibits an amplitude and vastness of moral virtue, exalted above all rivalship. How, then, does it happen, we may well ask, that while the devotion of Leonidas and his Spartans is never referred to, by men of refinement, without a warm tribute of praise, the sublime sacrifice of the Son of God, though, as a mere matter of taste, it ought to win for itself unparalleled admiration, extorts from them but too frequently not a single word of approbation!

There is, then, we think, no sublimity in external things. There is not only nothing in them which resembles the emotion we experience; but there is no permanent quality in them which can be said to be the unknown cause of the mental feeling. Sub-

limity is not in them, even as fragrance is in the rose; for the rose actually possesses that, from whence the sensation of fragrance directly results; whereas, the cause of our emotions of sublimity, is something which our imaginations have spread over external objects—certain affecting conceptions of power, or wisdom, in which we, so to speak, have arrayed them. Divest them of this covering, and of the unity which the mind only gives to them,* and they will appear "a multitude of separate and independent atoms, and nothing more."

If vastness, or any kindred property, which may suggest the notion of power, be that with which the emotion of sublimity is connected, we see the reason of two or three facts referred to by Dr. Brown, and which are, on his system, difficult to explain. Beauty is sometimes, he states, an ingredient in sublimity; at others, it is not so, though the two feelings are not, he thinks, essentially distinct from each other. The feeling of sublimity, is also, he adds, occasionally more akin to terror than to beauty. All this is perfectly consistent with the preceding statements. A lofty mountain, for instance, may be sublime from its magnitude, and beautiful from its form and contour; or its outline may be rugged, and unsightly. Could we shut out all apprehension of danger, what could be more beautiful than a vivid flash of lightning, in the stillness of the night, lifting for a moment the veil of darkness, and disclosing all the loveliness which it conceals? It is associated, however, with the notion of great power—power which may become the source of mischief, yea, of destruction to us; hence it is rather sublime than beautiful, and in certain states

* P. 30.

of mind, more terrible than either; *i. e.* it awakens only conceptions of danger, though, in other circumstances, it might have led to the notion of power, or recalled those feelings of pleasure in which the emotions of beauty consist.

All objects, then, derive their beauty and sublimity from association. The associated feelings, however, which confer upon them this adornment, are different; a circumstance which would appear to intimate, for I speak with hesitation and diffidence on this point, that the emotions of beauty and sublimity differ from each other.

### DEFORMITY AND LUDICROUSNESS.

The opposite emotion to beauty is deformity; while ludicrousness stands in contrast with sublimity. A few words will comprise all that it is necessary to say with regard to these emotions. Ludicrousness is that light mirth we feel on the unexpected perception of a strange mixture of congruity and incongruity. The congruity or incongruity, from which the emotion results, may exist *in the language* merely; as in the case of puns, where there is an agreement of sound, and a disagreement of sense;—or *in the thoughts and images which language expresses;* as when it brings to light some unexpected resemblances of objects or qualities, formerly regarded as incongruous—or some equally unexpected diversity among those in which the resemblance had been supposed before to be complete: or, in many cases, *in the very objects of our direct perception;* as when any well-dressed person, walking along the street, falls into the mud of some splashy gutter; in this case, the situation and the dirt, combined with the character and appearance of the unfortunate stumbler, form a sort of natural

burlesque, or mock heroic, in which there is a mixture of the noble and the mean, as in any of the works of art to which those names are given.

Dr. Brown considers this emotion as a complex state of mind, containing the following elements:—a combination of astonishment, resulting from the unexpectedness of the congruity or incongruity that is perceived; and a vivid feeling of delight, one of the forms of that joy or gladness which constitutes one of the elementary emotions.

### MORAL APPROBATION AND DISAPPROBATION.

The emotions we now proceed to consider arise in the mind on the contemplation of virtue and vice. Moral rectitude, as we shall afterwards see, is the correspondence or harmony of our mental affections, and our external conduct, with the various relations we sustain; and the Creator of the mind has not merely imparted to it the power of discerning this correspondence, but of approving an action which is manifestly in conformity with rectitude, and of disapproving another which as obviously violates it.

Most writers on ethical subjects admit the existence of moral judgments—or a power of distinguishing right from wrong; but some appear to forget that we have moral emotions, as well as moral judgments; or, in other words, that there is in the mind an original susceptibility of moral emotion, in consequence of which, actions of a moral character are regarded with powerful feelings of approval, or condemnation.

It is, however, as undoubted that the mind has been formed to approve what is right, as the intellect to discern it. Let the appeal be made to consciousness, and it will be found that the man who errs in argument, and the man who deviates from the rule

of moral rectitude, are viewed with very different feelings. It is the judgment which detects what is incorrect both in the reasoning and the conduct; but, in the latter case, there is a vivid emotion of disapprobation subsequent to the judgment, which never follows a mere mistake in ratiocination. And, if we gather the verdict of observation and experience, we shall find it in perfect harmony with the testimony of consciousness. Men who have shaken off the fetters of moral restraint, may be held together by motives of interest, but not by feelings of mutual respect. If they admire each other's talents, they cannot approve of each other's principles and conduct: the thing is incredible, impossible. The mind has no susceptibility of approving vice, considered as such; and, therefore, an unholy brotherhood of beings linked together for the accomplishment of some nefarious scheme, has been frequently broken up, through the mutual suspicions engendered by a feeling of each other's utter worthlessness.

The emotions of which we now speak, contribute to distinguish us, as moral agents, from brutes and inanimate objects, which are only capable of being governed by instinct or physical power. They are now, however, considered rather physiologically than ethically, as phænomena of the mind, indicating corresponding susceptibilities of mind; and so adapted to give us a fuller and more correct conception of the mind, as a spiritual substance or essence. In this sense we may say, in defining the mind, that it is that which morally approves and disapproves, as well as that it is that which thinks and feels, and judges, &c.

While some have overlooked the susceptibility of moral emotion, as a constituent part of the mental constitution, others have denied the existence of moral

judgments; at least they have forgotten, that a moral emotion necessarily presupposes an exercise of moral judgment, pronouncing upon the rectitude or criminality of the action which excites the emotion. This appears to me to be the great error, or rather one of the great errors, of Dr. Brown on the subject of morals. His doctrine upon this subject is, that the emotions of approbation and disapprobation, of which we speak, "are not the result of an intellectual comparison of the action with certain rules of propriety derived from any source whatever,"—"that they do not even presuppose any such comparison, except that of the action itself and its circumstances,"—"that the rules of propriety to which we have referred, are not previous to the emotions, but the emotions to the rules, of which they constitute, in truth, the foundation." In short the Doctor, misled by his notions of beauty, supposes that as we do not first *pronounce* an object beautiful, and then *feel* the emotion of beauty, so we do not first pronounce an action right, and then feel the emotion of moral approbation; the emotion in both cases takes the lead; and as we call that object beautiful which excites the emotion of beauty, so we designate that action right which awakens the emotion of moral approbation.

This statement exhibits only a part of the errors, as I cannot but regard them, which are to be found in that department of the Doctor's Lectures which are more properly ethical, yet it contains all that it is necessary for me to notice at present. I shall have occasion afterwards to examine the necessary consequence of this doctrine, *viz.* that virtue is nothing in itself, &c. I now simply encounter the position, that no moral judgment precedes our moral emotions; and state, in opposition to it, that a perception or

conception of an action as right or wrong, invariably precedes an emotion of approbation or disapprobation. That we have moral judgments—*notions* of actions as virtuous, or the contrary—will scarcely be denied; and that such judgments are presupposed, in our moral emotions, is manifest from the circumstance, that the latter are uniformly governed, and may be reversed, by the former. Let an action be ever so praise-worthy, it excites no feeling of approbation, if we do not *regard* it as a *right* action. And, on the contrary, let it be ever so flagitious, it awakens no feeling of condemnation, if it be not *considered* an *improper* action. Persecution, on the ground of religious opinion, will be allowed to be censurable and criminal; yet the mind of the persecutor Saul, did not disapprove either of his own conduct, or of that of his companions in iniquity, because he verily thought *that he ought* to do many things contrary to the name of Christ. Did not judgment precede and govern feeling in this instance? How can it be doubted, especially as we find, that at a future period, when his moral judgment was reversed, his feelings also underwent a change; and that he then so strongly condemned the conduct he had once approved, as to include it in the catalogue of his greatest sins, that he had persecuted the church of God.

And how are we to account for the different state of feeling with which the same action is contemplated, unless we ascribe it to the different views which are taken of its moral character? To say nothing of parricide, infanticide, the offering up of human sacrifices—practices abhorred by us, but approved, at least not disapproved, by multitudes—how is it to be explained that one-half of the inhabitants of this country practise habitually, without any self-reproach,

certain modes of conduct, which the other half cannot witness without powerful feelings of disapprobation? Is it not the case that their moral judgments differ, and that, from this difference, there results a corresponding difference of moral feeling? And the only way to produce harmony of feeling, is to produce harmony of judgment. Let us only succeed in lodging a conviction in the judgments of those whose conduct we condemn, that it is morally wrong; and, however fatally the heart may be entangled, the feeling of moral disapprobation will infallibly arise.

We do not then merely form notions of actions as right or wrong, but we approve of the one, and disapprove of the other. The mind has an original susceptibility of moral emotion; but this emotion does not arise on the mere contemplation of an action; it follows and is governed by the moral judgment which the mind forms of it. Even Dr. Brown himself, in attempting to account for that diversity, and even contrariety of moral emotion, to which I have alluded, is obliged to ascribe it to the different view which is formed of the result of the action. There is, on his scheme, an exercise of the intellect—a decision of the judgment; but that decision is, not that the action is right or wrong, but that it is beneficial, or the contrary. Those actions which are conceived, by the individuals who contemplate them, to issue in good, excite necessarily, without any notion of their rectitude, the emotion of approbation; and those whose tendency is to evil, awaken the feeling of disapprobation. The notion of rectitude is, he thinks, subsequent to the emotion, and built upon it. I apprehend this statement is at variance with consciousness. We do not first *feel* an action, if I may so speak, to be wrong, and then *judge* it to be wrong. That

would be a backward motion of the mechanism of the mind, if I may employ such a figure. Nor do we, I conceive, in point of fact, judge an action to be beneficial or injurious; but we judge it to be right or wrong; and the judgment is instantly succeeded by a corresponding emotion of approbation, or disapprobation.

The preceding statements, representing a susceptibility of moral emotion as forming an essential part of the mental constitution, are adapted to shew the unphilosophical nature of an objection which has been brought against the doctrine of moral necessity, *viz.* that, on that scheme, it is impossible to render praise or blame to the conduct of men. The obvious reply is, that a voluntary agent in the commission of evil *must* be disapproved. It is in vain to allege that he was constrained by the power of motives which had a necessary influence upon his mind, to act as he did; for, whether the allegation be true or not, it is easy to reply, that we are at least equally constrained by the constitution of our minds to disapprove, and condemn him.

The moralist cannot fail to observe of how much importance these moral emotions are, as the restrainers and punishers of vice, at any rate of openly licentious conduct. Dark as is the moral aspect of many parts of the world, how much more distressing would be the scene, were there not a restraint, in this part of our mental constitution, upon some of the worst passions of our nature. Dr. Brown has written with great warmth and eloquence on this subject; but the natural amiableness of his mind, combined with his excellent moral principles, has led him to ascribe too much power to the moral guard of which we speak. From the manner in which he expresses himself, a careless

observer of man might be led to suppose, that visible immorality is a kind of "*rara avis*" in the world—that the indignant voice within the bosom, of which he speaks, remonstrating against the contemplated deed of immorality, in union with the certainty that that voice will be re-echoed by the dreadful award of all around him, would compel the transgressor, in every instance, to retire from the possibility of human observation at least, before he permitted the development of his passions, if it did not altogether prevent his indulgence of them. Such, however, is not the fact; and, therefore, while we do rejoice in the degree of influence which these emotions possess in preventing the prevalence of vice, it becomes us, at the same time, to mourn over that deep degeneracy of our race, which, notwithstanding the existence of barriers so strong, has yet the power "to deluge the earth with volcanic eruptions of anarchy and crime!"

### LOVE AND HATRED.

The former of these terms comprehends a great variety of emotions, which take different names, according to the objects towards which they are directed, or to their different degrees of intensity. When the emotion is awakened by our own particular interests exclusively, it is called self-love; when it is directed towards mankind generally, it is denominated good-will, or benevolence; when it embraces particular individuals, it may be friendship, or patriotism, parental, filial, conjugal, or paternal affection. To express those modifications of the affection which are produced by some of its more strongly marked different degrees of intensity, it takes the name of regard, respect, esteem, veneration, &c.

The analysis of this emotion presents us, in the

opinion of Dr. Brown, with two elements; *viz.* a vivid delight in the contemplation of the object of affection, and a desire of good to that object. The latter is the result of the former. It is, however, an important remark of this writer, that the delight which forms invariably a constituent part of the emotion, admits of great variety. "The love which we feel for a near relation may not, in our maturer years, be exactly the same emotion as that which we feel for a friend; the love which we feel for one relation, or friend, *of one character*, not exactly the same as the love which we feel for another relation, perhaps of the same degree of propinquity, or for another friend of a different character; yet if we were to attempt to state these differences in words, we might make them a little more obscure, but we could not make them more intelligible." They are better known by the distinctive phrases—love of parents, friends, country, &c.—than by any description of the variety of the feelings themselves; as the difference between the sweetness of honey, and that of sugar, is better known by these mere names of the particular substances which excite the feelings, than by any description of the difference of the sweetnesses. "Or rather," adds Dr. Brown, "in the one way it is capable of being made known to those who have ever tasted the two substances; in the other way, no words which human art could employ, if the substances themselves are not named, would be able to make known the distinctive shades."

It follows necessarily, from this analysis of love, that some quality must exist, or must be conceived to exist, in the beloved object, which, by virtue of the constitution of the mind, is capable of yielding pleasure to it. This quality, then, let it be especially observed, is the object of love, or that by which the emotion is

excited. The emotion is in itself delightful; it is *happiness* to love; but we do not love for the sake of the pleasure of loving. If that were the case, there would be the same inducement to love all the objects by which we are surrounded, the pleasure of loving being in all cases, when at least the emotion is equally intense, the same; and, therefore, the actual direction of our love, would be a mere matter of accident. Besides, the act of loving must be performed, before we can experience the pleasure of the act. Love exists, in the order of nature, *before* the pleasure; and so cannot be awakened *by* the pleasure, unless we admit that the effect may sometimes produce the cause. It may also be further stated, that, if no pleasure attended the act of loving, we should be constrained, by the constitution of our minds, to give our regard to those qualities which now awaken our affection; as we are constrained to despise the mean and the profligate, though no pleasure is experienced in despising. The pleasure of loving is not, then, the cause, or object of the affection.

The emotions of hatred are awakened by the perception of any thing which the tendencies of our nature, either mental or moral, render evil to us. They do not arise on the occurrence of absolute suffering merely, but on the anticipation of suffering, or on the prospect of a diminution of that portion of good which we enjoy, or wish to possess. In its general nature, the emotion of hatred is directly opposite to that of love; and presents, accordingly, to our analysis, a strong feeling of pain on the contemplation of an object, and a desire of injury to it. It is modified also, like the emotion of love, by the objects against which it is directed, as well as by its degree of intensity.

The importance of both these classes of emotions must not be overlooked. The benevolent affections, as they are properly called, contribute largely to the happiness of mankind, both by the pleasure which they directly yield to those in whose minds they are awakened, and by the happiness which they diffuse by the actions to which they lead. A benevolent man is the producer of happiness to others, and the subject of happiness himself; for to love is to enjoy, and he only can be perfectly miserable who has nothing to love, or who is to no being the object of love. "So consolatory is regard," says Dr. Brown, "in all the agitations of life, except under the horrors of remorse, that he who has one heart to share his affection, though he may still have feelings to which we must continue to give the name of sorrow, cannot be miserable; while he who has no heart that would care whether he were suffering or enjoying, alive or dead—and who has himself no regard to the suffering or enjoyment of a single individual, may be rich, indeed, in the external *means* of happiness, but cannot be rich in *happiness*, which external things may *promote*, but are as little capable of *producing*, as the incense on the altar of giving out its aromatic odours, where there is no warmth to kindle it into fragrance."* In harmony with these statements it has been said, with inimitable beauty, as well as truth, that heaven is perfect love, and hell the perfect want of love.

Nor is a susceptibility of the malevolent affections, as they are called, though improperly, an unnecessary part of the mental constitution. They are the defence of happiness against the injustice which would otherwise be every moment invading it. The indignation,

* Vol. III. p. 272.

and abhorrence, which are awakened by deeds of lawless violence, add to the force of penal sanctions, and guard us against aggressions which no mere statutary enactments could entirely prevent. It has been thought by some moralists inconsistent with the justice and holiness of God to suppose, that he has implanted in the mind a susceptibility of these emotions. The opinion can only have originated in a misapprehension of the nature of the susceptibility; "for a capability of loathing vice is necessary to moral excellence; without it we should be the very beings whom we were not formed capable of abhorring." The existence of such a capability renders, doubtless, an improper development of it possible—as the power of loving renders it possible to love sin; but HE who implanted the susceptibility, is not accountable for this sinful development of it. The emotion itself is, as we have seen, a strong feeling of pain on the contemplation of an object regarded by us as an evil object, in union with a desire of injury to it. Now it will not be alleged that the painful feeling is improper; and it is equally manifest, that the accompanying desire of injury is not so *per se*. I may desire evil to an individual, and even inflict evil upon him, with the most virtuous and benevolent intention. The moral character of the desire depends upon the intention. If, indeed, we desire evil to an individual merely as evil, how much soever he may deserve it—if we do not desire it as a means of some more ultimate good, our desire is then fitly characterized by the terms malice, envy, &c., and must be given up to condemnation, as being a sinful development of a susceptibility which is not morally evil *per se*. There is, doubtless, great danger of this improper development; and all who value the approbation of conscience, must be on their

guard here: but when we analyze the feeling, and consider what is its ultimate object, we shall find that the "term malevolent is far from being the most appropriate that might be employed to express it, and that it is only in a qualified sense that it can at all be applied. Is its object the communication of suffering to a sensitive being, or the punishment of injustice and cruelty?" (or more ultimately, we may add, the reformation of the unjust and cruel man,) "a little reflection will convince us, that the latter was its original and proper object."*

Thus the great Creator of the mind has formed it capable both of love and hatred; but "he has not formed it to have equal enjoyment in both." And in this circumstance we perceive the strongest proof of his goodness. Love aims at pouring enjoyment upon all around,—hatred at inflicting suffering; now it is happiness to love, and misery to hate. Can this be accident? Is it possible to doubt, that HE who implanted in the mind all its susceptibilities, designed the happiness of his creatures?

### SYMPATHY.

The mind, it is supposed, possesses a power of so entering into the circumstances of others, as to partake of their feelings. And if these words are not very strictly interpreted, there can be no doubt that we possess such a power. "Without any direct cause of pain we catch pain," in the emphatic language of Dr. Brown, "as it were, by a sort of contagious sensibility, from the mere violence of another's anguish." Nor is it merely with pain that we sympathize; pleasure is also infectious, though perhaps not to the same degree. This has, indeed, been denied by some

* Dewar's Moral Philosophy, Vol. I. pp. 394-5.

philosophers, who, misled by the etymology of the word, tell us, that the proper idea of sympathy is that of *suffering* with another. No candid observer of facts, however, can doubt, it is presumed, that we rejoice with them that rejoice, as well as weep with them that weep. "There is a charm in general gladness that steals upon us without our perceiving it; and if we have no cause of sorrow, it is sufficient for our momentary comfort, that we be in the company of the happy."

It is generally imagined, however, that the mind possesses a stronger comparative tendency to participate in the sad, than in the gay, emotions of those around us; and this tendency is by some supposed to be the result of a process of reasoning. "It arises," we are told, "in a great measure from the conception that the state of suffering has stronger claims upon our fellow feeling than a state of joy. The happy man, we are apt to imagine, is happy enough without us; but the suffering man needs our commiseration, and help. It must be admitted, also," the same writer proceeds, "that self-love at times affects our sympathy. We form a comparison, in the case of distress, which makes us sensible of the weakness of the individual, of his dependence upon ourselves, and of his need of help. On this ground, it is conceived, that there will afterwards be an obligation to be grateful to us, arising out of the action of the sympathetic feeling; but in the case of joy, there is an inversion of this order. The individual whose happiness makes us happy, is not considered as owing any obligation to us for our sympathy. The obligation, on the contrary, seems to lie on the other side; and it is easy to conceive that we may be unwilling to incur this obligation."

It is impossible to refuse to the preceding statement the praise of ingenuity; yet it is, I think, radically defective. The considerations mentioned by this writer may set in motion the *hand*, but they will not give the *heart* of sympathy;—they do not exhibit the source of the alleged superior *feeling* in the case of distress; they merely account for the ready help that is afforded. If it be a fact that we more readily and powerfully sympathize with sorrow than with joy, it seems impossible to account for this fact—on the admission of a distinct susceptibility of sympathy—without supposing that the principle is naturally more vigorous in the one case than in the other. I am, however, much disposed to regard it as an unsupported assumption, that there is in the mind a stronger tendency to sympathize with sorrow than joy. The truth of the case will, perhaps, be found to be, that every one enters more readily into that feeling, whether it be sorrow, or joy, which has been most prevalent in his own mind.

It is not, however, certain that sympathy in the general feelings of others, is the result of a distinct susceptibility of mind. It may be possible, perhaps, to trace all its phænomena to another law of the mind. Even Dr. Brown, who maintains, though with some hesitation, that the mind possesses an original tendency to sympathy, admits that many of its phænomena may be traced to suggestion. "It may be considered," he says, "as a necessary consequence of the laws of suggestion, that the sight of any of the symbols of internal feeling, should recall to us the feeling itself, in the same way as a portrait, or rather, as the alphabetic name of our friend, recalls to us the conception of our friend himself. Some faint and shadowy sadness we undoubtedly should feel, therefore, when the

external signs of sadness were before us; some greater cheerfulness, on the appearance of cheerfulness in others, even though we had no peculiar susceptibility of sympathizing emotions, distinct from the mere general tendencies of suggestion." Now, if some of the phænomena of sympathy *must*, as Dr. Brown acknowledges, be resolved into suggestion, that fact lays a strong ground of probability that all *may* be thus resolved. And in support of this sentiment several powerful arguments may be adduced. *We have the feelings of sympathy, when there is no object of sympathy.* We shudder, as if sympathizing, but shudder at a mere thought, as when under the influence of some lively conception of danger, which will produce similar involuntary muscular movements, with the actual peril. *Our sympathetic feelings are found to be most lively, when the circumstances of the individual who attracts our sympathy, have been most similar to our own.* The man who has encountered and escaped the dangers of a storm, feels most acutely when the vessel, in the distance, appears with her signals of distress, and to which no assistance can be rendered. With the mother, bereft of her first-born, none will sympathize so tenderly, as those who have sustained a similar bereavement. It is not easy to explain this on the assumption, that sympathy is an original susceptibility given to enable us to enter into the feelings of others. But if on the other hand, it be the result of suggestion, it is manifest that the tears and anguish of the bereft mother, will recall very powerfully to the mind of her friend, the hour and the poignancy of her own anguish; *i. e.* her sympathy will be greater than that of others. *The analysis, also, of sympathy tends, I apprehend, to shew that it is not the result of an original susceptibility.* Dr. Cogan,

indeed, seems to consider it as simply the participation of the feelings of others; the analysis of Dr. Brown is, however, more correct. Sympathy in sorrow consists, according to his statements, of two successive states of mind—the feeling of the sorrow of others—and the desire of relieving it. The first element of this complex feeling is here, I apprehend, very unhappily described. What is meant by the feeling of the sorrow of others? We may, indeed, feel sorrow in company with others; our sorrowful feelings may resemble theirs; but it is only in a figurative sense that we can be said to feel *their* sorrows. *These* arise from causes which do not affect us. The state of their minds cannot become ours; it is incapable of transference. Nothing more can with truth be said than that, in sympathy, we are the subjects of feelings which resemble those of our friends; and the general laws of suggestion sufficiently account for their existence. Suggestion recalls past feelings, as well as past ideas, or conceptions. The indications of grief which we witness, recall or renew the grief we have formerly experienced; so that the pain we feel in sympathy is our own pain, it cannot possibly be the pain of others; and the susceptibility of sympathy, instead of being distinct and original, may be nothing more than the readiness with which the general principle of suggestion recalls our past feelings of pleasure or of pain, when we observe the external symbols of either in others. If this readiness cannot be resolved into any of the secondary laws of suggestion, it will follow that though in one sense, sympathy is *not* original—inasmuch as it is not distinct from the general principle of suggestion; yet that, in another sense, it *is* original—inasmuch as a natural and an especial tendency has been given to the general principle, to recall our own

joys and sorrows, when we witness the joys and sorrows of others. I cannot but think, however, that the peculiar interest which all men attach to every thing that concerns themselves, will account for this particular development of the general principle of suggestion.

If the preceding statements be correct, they evince the truth of a remark of Dr. Brown, that "there is nothing peculiar in the mere grief which constitutes one of the elements of sympathy." It cannot be peculiar, because it is a renewal of the grief which we may have experienced in numberless instances before, and which is more readily recalled, according to the ordinary laws of association, after every additional instance of its recurrence; a circumstance which explains the fact, that those who have suffered much, are the most addicted to sympathy. And if there be nothing peculiar in the *grief*, there is surely nothing more peculiar in the *desire* which constitutes one of the elements of sympathy; so that the general susceptibilities of experiencing grief and desire, will account for the phænomena of sympathy, without calling in the aid of a third original principle.

They explain also another assertion made by Dr. Brown, while they correct a mistake into which he appears to have fallen. "Sympathy is not," he says, "a modification of love;" and in support of this statement he appeals to the well-known and conclusive fact, that we sympathize with an individual in pain, whom we regard not with love, but positive dislike and even abhorrence. There is nothing mysterious in this on the principles just stated. The symptoms of pain will recall our own former sufferings by the common laws of association, whatever be the character of the sufferer. I do not see how our love, or our hatred,

## PRIDE AND HUMILITY.

Pride is said by Dr. Cogan to be "that exalted idea of our state, qualifications, and attainments, &c. which exceeds the boundaries of justice, and induces us to look down upon our supposed inferiors with some degree of unmerited contempt." This definition of pride excludes it from the class of emotions altogether; it exhibits it as an intellectual estimate of ourselves; as a mistaken judgment, requiring, of course, for its existence, no distinct and original susceptibility of mind. And this definition is the more objectionable, because humility, which is certainly the direct opposite of pride, is permitted to remain in the class of emotions. It is said to be not *too low* an idea of our state, &c. &c., but a degree of habitual sorrow and painful apprehension, in consequence of this estimate of our condition and character.

There can be no reasonable doubt, I think, that the terms pride and humility, denote states of mind which belong, partly at least, to the order of feelings. They involve, doubtless, an intellectual estimate of our attainments; but, properly speaking, they denote "the vivid feelings of joy or sadness, which attend the contemplation of ourselves, when we regard our superiority or inferiority, in any qualities of mind or body, or in the external circumstances in which we may be placed." The emotion, then, involved in pride is not essentially immoral; and the recollection of this statement will deliver us from certain difficulties, of a moral aspect, with which some other accounts are embarrassed. If it be lawful to desire high attainments, in intellectual and moral excellence, it must be lawful to rejoice when we have been enabled to make them. Besides, the mind has been formed to rejoice

in such circumstances, and, therefore, the feeling of satisfaction cannot be evil, *per se*. Dr. Brown states that the moral turpitude which we generally, and, it must be granted, justly attach to pride, does not lie in the pleasure of excellence, as a mere direct emotion, but in those ill-ordered affections which may have led us to the pursuit of excellence, that is unworthy of our desire, or in the vanity and haughtiness which may spring out of it. "The feeling of our excellence," says he, "may give rise directly, or indirectly, to various other affections of mind. It may lead us to impress others, as much as possible, with *our* superiority,—which we may do in two ways, by presenting to them at every moment, some proofs of *our advantages*, mental, bodily, or in the gifts of fortune; or, by bringing to their minds directly *their inferiority*, by the scorn with which we treat them. The former of these modes of conduct is what is commonly termed vanity; the latter, haughtiness; but both, though they may arise from our mere comparison of ourselves and others, and our consequent feeling of superiority, are the results of pride, not pride itself." The emotion of gladness which arises from the conscious attainment of high degrees of excellence, takes its moral character from the nature of the excellence in which superiority had been desired.

The term pride is sometimes used, not to mark this elementary emotion, but a prevalent disposition of mind to discover superiority in itself, where it does not exist; and to dwell on the contemplation of the superiority where it does exist, with a humbling disdain, perhaps, of those that are inferior. In this sense, pride "is unquestionably a vice as degrading to the mind of an individual, as it is offensive to that great Being, who has formed the superior and the

inferior, for mutual offices of benevolence; and who often compensates, by excellencies that are unknown to the world, the more glaring disparity in qualities which the world is quicker in discerning."

This prevalent disposition in any mind to discover superiority in itself, is generally accompanied by a tendency to take a low standard of comparison. Let us conceive of two persons who have made an equal degree of intellectual progress; one compares himself with individuals *before* him, and the other, with those who are *behind* him, in the march of general improvement; the one will probably be proud, the other humble. Now whether the adoption of different standards be regarded as the cause, or the consequence of pride, it cannot be doubted that an habitual tendency to seek a high standard of comparison, is the most excellent and noble state of mind. "They measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." "An habitual tendency to look beneath, rather than above," says Dr. Brown, "is the prevailing tendency of mind, which we call pride; while a disposition to look above, rather than below, and to feel an inferiority, therefore, which others do not perceive, is the character which is denominated humility. Is it false then, or extravagant to say, that humility is truly the nobler; and that pride, which delights in the contemplation of the abject things beneath, is truly in itself more abject, than that meekness of heart which is humble because it has greater objects, and which looks with reverence to the excellence that is above it, because it is formed with a capacity of feeling all the worth of that excellence which it reveres?"*

* Vol. III. p. 314.

## Class II.

### *Retrospective Emotions; comprehending those which relate to Objects as past.*

The conception of some object of former pleasure or pain, is essential to the complex feeling denoted by these emotions; and, on that account, they are denominated Retrospective. In this class are included anger, gratitude, regret, gladness, remorse, and self-approbation. Dr. Brown admits a subdivision here, founded apparently on the circumstance, for he does not well explain his meaning, that other individuals, *personally considered,* are the direct objects of anger and gratitude, but not of regret, &c. &c.

#### ANGER,

Is a feeling of displeasure excited by any injury which is either done or intended, to ourselves, or to others. It involves in it, or rather it presupposes, a conception of the injury, and it may be followed by a desire of retaliation; but, strictly speaking, anger is the emotion of displeasure itself, exclusive both of its cause, and its consequences.

We have a considerable variety of names to mark the various modifications of anger, some of which are intended apparently to exhibit different degrees of the feeling of displeasure itself—as indignation, anger, wrath, rage, &c.; and others, to denote different degrees and modifications of the desire of retaliation with which, as we have said, it is generally accompanied,—as resentment, rancour, revenge, &c.

This statement of the nature of anger will assist us in disposing of the question which has been agitated with reference to the moral character of this emotion.

Some regard it as evil *per se*. But if so, it cannot result from an original susceptibility; and to suppose that it does not, is absurd. If the mind had not been formed to be angry, in certain circumstances, how could anger at any time exist? Besides, if anger were in itself sinful, how could Jehovah be represented, even in a figurative sense, as the subject of it? How could *He* who was separate from sin, have looked upon men with anger? How could we be exhorted to be angry, and sin not? These considerations prove that anger is not evil *per se;* and, if it be a mere emotion of displeasure on the infliction of any evil upon us, how can it be conceived that an essentially immoral character attaches to it? Anger becomes sinful, doubtless, when it springs up without sufficient cause, or when it rises to excess, or when it continues too long;—all of which, it must be conceded, too frequently takes place, in consequence of the moral perversity of our nature;—but the emotion of displeasure itself is not more essentially evil, than the affection of love which may arise improperly as well as anger. And though the moral character of the accompanying desire of retaliation is far more questionable, and must, in some of its modifications, be given up to unmingled reprobation, I can scarcely venture to pronounce even *this* evil *per se*. Man, in consequence of depravity, is an enemy to man. It seems accordingly necessary that there should be a principle in his mental constitution, to operate as a moral restraint upon his disposition to violence and outrage. This moral guard is the desire of retaliation which the evil doer awakens against himself. The mere emotion of displeasure might be insufficient for the purpose. The aggressor might not be repressed by a fire which blazed for

a moment, and then expired. Resentment, which secures the bringing of the transgressor to punishment, must be added to displeasure; and both combined operate powerfully "to save from guilt, and the consequences of guilt, the individual who might otherwise have dared to be unjust, and the individual who would have suffered from the unjust invasion."

It is necessary to observe here, however, that to reach the sublime height of Christian morality, this natural desire of retaliation (for I admit that the mind was formed capable of experiencing it) must not be cherished for its own sake; it must be subordinated to the ultimate design of preventing the evil which it punishes. It should also be further observed, that though anger, and even resentment, or a desire of retaliation, may not be evil *per se*, they are in great danger of becoming so. Dr. Brown has given an admirable statement of the cases in which the former must be regarded as improper. The following is a bare abstract of his remarks.

1st, When it arises too soon—without reflection—when the injury which awakens it, is only apparent, and was designed to do good. The disposition which becomes too speedily angry, we call a passionate disposition.

2dly, When it is disproportionate to the offence. An individual feels that he is injured, it may be, in an inconsiderable degree; but, without inquiry or thought, he pours out at once all his fury upon the offender. To guard against this, we should call in the aid of reflection,

3dly, When it is transferred from the guilty to the innocent, as in the case of a fretful disposition.

4thly, When it is too long protracted. The disposition is said, in that case, to be revengeful—a disposition

of which it is difficult to say whether the guilt or the deformity be the greater.

If a theological difficulty should occur to any of my readers, founded on the consideration that man was not designed by his Maker to be the foe of man, and so did not need that moral guard against aggression and violence of which we have been speaking, I would remind them that God, who sees the end from the beginning, may have been led to give to him a mental constitution, which was adapted to what he foreknew would become his permanent and general condition.

### GRATITUDE.

Gratitude, says Dr. Cogan, "is a pleasant affection excited by a lively sense of benefits received, or intended;" it is indeed a modification of the emotion of love. The love of gratitude is kindled by kindness; and hence we are said to "love God, because he first loved us." Other species of love are excited, it is supposed, by some excellence, or imagined excellence, which resides habitually in the object of affection; and hence, it has been usual to draw a line of distinction between the love of gratitude, and the love of complacency. There may, however, be less difference between them, than is commonly imagined. Dr. Cogan remarks, very justly, as it appears to me, "that gratitude is mostly connected with an impressive sense of the amiable disposition of the person by whom the benefit is conferred, and that it immediately produces a personal affection for him."* Now, if this be the case, the exciting cause of gratitude may be the "amiable disposition" from whence it is conceived, at least,

* P. 150.

that the streams of kindness flow; and this is an excellence of a moral kind. The object of gratitude is not the gift, but the giver. It involves, doubtless, value of the gift; since, when we receive nothing which is felt by us to be a good, there is no display of kindness, and nothing, of course, to excite gratitude; but gratitude, properly so called, is love to the donor, and not love to the bounty conferred by him, or a miser might be one of the most grateful beings in the world. It may be, in short, love to that benevolence which prompted the gift. In support of the preceding statements, many reasons may be assigned.

*First,* a hard-hearted and vindictive man is seldom so fortunate, though he may scatter with profusion the gifts of his bounty all around him, as to awaken in those who receive them the feeling of gratitude.

*Secondly,* where that feeling does arise, it is accompanied with a conviction that, notwithstanding his rough exterior, he possesses more real kindness than is usually imagined. To others he may appear a compound of every thing that is detestable; but the grateful man sees in him a redeeming spark of benevolence.

*Thirdly,* the benefits we receive awaken no gratitude if they are conceived to flow from any other source than kindness. The bestowment of a princely fortune upon us, by an individual who manifestly cared neither for our joys nor our sorrows, and evidently aimed only at gaining a reputation for splendid liberality, would fail to touch our hearts. We feel no gratitude to the advocate who saves our property, nor to the physician who saves our lives, unless we conceive that some feelings of kindness, and of concern for us, blend with a sense of professional obligation, and prompt, in some degree, the exertion of their skill.

*Fourthly,* the smallest amount of benefit will

awaken the liveliest feelings of gratitude, when it is an unequivocal manifestation of a benevolent temper, and an affectionate interest in our welfare. How should this be the case if the love of gratitude were excited by the gift, and not by a conception of the amiable qualities which prompted its communication? I am well aware, that the most powerful feelings of gratitude are generally awakened by splendid donations, and by frequently repeated acts of kindness; but this may result from the circumstance that they are viewed as more unequivocal and striking proofs of that amiableness of disposition, which, as I am now endeavouring to shew, is the exciting cause of gratitude; and this statement explains the fact, mentioned by Cogan, that "when the affection operates according to the natural course of influence, it will be correspondent to the importance of the good obtained—the distance in station between the recipient and his benefactor—the smallness of his claims—perhaps the consciousness of deserving very different treatment." Hence, we may add, the warmth of gratitude which the Christian manifests to the Giver of all good.

### REGRET AND GLADNESS.

The affections which bear these names are said, by Dr. Brown, to be "the emotions with which we look back on past events, as mere events of advantage or disadvantage to us, without including any notion of our own moral propriety or impropriety of conduct." It might have been better, perhaps, if the Doctor had said "to us," *and to others*; because we regret the evils which befall our friends, and are glad to receive intelligence of their prosperity. In this respect there is a broad line of distinction between this and the following pair of emotions. We may regret the conduct

of our friends—we may disapprove of it, but we never suffer remorse on account of it; our consciences only accuse or excuse ourselves.

In regret and gladness, the simple emotion of pleasure and of pain, which constitutes one of their elements, is combined with a conception of its cause. In this, and in this only, as we have formerly seen, do they differ from emotions which were considered in the former class. We may "be melancholy or cheerful without knowing why;" on the contrary, the cause of our regret or gladness it is always possible to specify. That cause must be a past event; and the retrospective reference is so important a part of the complex whole, that the state of mind which involves this reference may admit, if not require, a different classification.

Few events are productive of unmixed evil or good; by far the greater number are the source of both. It is accordingly manifest, that the emotions they excite will correspond with the view which an individual takes of them. If the evil merely be contemplated, regret will arise; if the good exclusively, gladness will be awakened; if both be contemplated, the two emotions will be excited, each modifying the other. Regret and gladness do not then depend upon the nature of events merely, but also upon the tendency of the mind to dwell, as we say in familiar language, on the dark or the bright side of things. There are individuals whom nothing can permanently depress; there are others whom nothing can permanently cheer. In the former, we find an habitual desire to trace the favourable consequences of events; and this desire, as Dr. Brown beautifully and philosophically explains it, "influences the train of our suggestions" (as our other desires lead to the suggestion of images accordant with them); "it calls up those results which may minister

to our enjoyment or our benefit;" and thus the very cup of sorrow itself is drained of half its bitterness.

The preceding statement evinces the importance, in a philosophical point of view, of that confidence in the Divine wisdom and goodness which the Gospel requires us to display. It powerfully tends to induce that habit of mind to trace the favourable consequences of events which, as we have just seen, is so eminently desirable; "which is," indeed, as Dr. Brown well says, "almost the same thing to us as if adverse had been transformed into fortunate and prosperous events." Thus it enables us in some measure to walk by sight as well as by faith.

### REMORSE AND SELF-APPROBATION.

Remorse is that dreadful feeling of self-accusation and condemnation which arises on the retrospect of our guilt. It is combined with, or pre-supposes, a perception of criminality; and, consequently, a knowledge of the standard by which actions are weighed; but remorse itself is, properly speaking, the vivid feeling of regret, and self-condemnation, which is consequent upon this intellectual state of mind.

The opposite of this emotion, for which our language does not supply us with an unexceptionable name, "is the delightful feeling of self-approbation, which arises on the retrospect of innocence and virtue." The scriptural exhortation, to "keep a conscience void of offence," decidedly proves both that the human mind is capable, physically speaking, of experiencing the emotion, and that the state of mind which it denotes may be habitually attained, to a certain degree at least, by great care and watchfulness.

Some writers consider the emotions of which we are now speaking, and which we may denominate

*moral* regret and *moral* gladness, as being, in truth, the feelings of moral approbation and disapprobation, already considered—modified by the circumstance that the conduct approved or condemned is our own. Dr. Brown, more correctly as it appears to me, distinguishes them. "The emotions," says he, "with which we regard the virtues and vices of others, are very different from those with which we regard the same vices and virtues as our own. There is the distinctive moral feeling, indeed, in both cases, whether the generous sacrifice, or the malignant atrocity which we consider, be the deed of another, or of our own heroic kindness or guilty passion; but, in the one case, there is something far more than mere approbation, however pleasing, or mere disapprobation, however disagreeable. There is the dreadful moral regret, arising from the certainty that we have rendered ourselves unworthy of the love of men, and the approbation of God."* His description of the counterpart of this moral regret it is unnecessary to transcribe. It is further manifest to me, also, that *moral* regret is essentially different both from *mere* regret and moral disapprobation, from the fact that, how dear soever the offender may be to us, and with whatever bitterness of feeling we may contemplate his misconduct, there does not arise any thing like the feeling of remorse.

The susceptibility of experiencing the emotions we are now considering constitutes, I apprehend, what is usually called the power of conscience. Some, indeed, regard conscience as a modification of the faculty of judgment, as it is ordinarily denominated, or rather, perhaps, as the judgment exercised in pronouncing upon the moral character of actions. This appears to me a very obvious mistake. The operations

* Vol. III. p. 534.

of conscience are confined to ourselves—the faculty of judgment includes others within the range of its decisions. My judgment pronounces the conduct of a friend to be wrong, but it cannot be said that my conscience condemns him. The doctrine also, now opposed, loses sight of the distinct offices of judgment and conscience. Judgment is the jury which brings in the verdict of guilty; conscience is the executioner, who strikes the avenging blow.

There are others who regard conscience as an internal sense, which decides upon the moral character of actions as the eye discriminates colours. But, if that were the case, how could the *decisions* of conscience, (as they are called,) with regard to the moral propriety of actions, be reversed, as they frequently are, by the mere illumination of the understanding? When did any accession of knowledge cause the colour scarlet to appear green, or green scarlet? Besides, the notion of conscience as a sense, which decides on the morality of actions, is open to the objection referred to above; *viz.* that the office of conscience is not to pronounce an action right or wrong; but, if I may so speak, to reward it in the one case, and to punish it in the other.

It is better, therefore, to consider conscience as the susceptibility of experiencing those emotions of approbation, or disapprobation and condemnation, which are awakened by a retrospect of the moral demerit, or the moral excellence, of our own conduct. The operation of conscience is, in all cases, subsequent, in the order of nature at least, to a conviction of demerit, or the contrary. By an original law of the mind, self-approbation, or self-condemnation, arises as an individual *conceives* himself innocent or guilty, whether that conviction be well or ill founded. The approval

of conscience does not, then, afford certain evidence that our conduct has been consistent with true rectitude; the disapprobation of conscience is not infallible proof, that our conduct has been contrary to it. The conscience of Paul applauded him while persecuting the church of God. The consciences of some of the primitive Christians condemned them while eating "meats which had been sacrificed to idols;" though there was no moral evil in the latter case, and flagrant iniquity in the former.

The view just given of the nature of conscience is free, it is imagined, from the objections which are urged against the common statements in regard to it. It does not identify it with the judgment, nor does it render it independent of the judgment. It accounts for the diversity of its operations, and it confines its influence to ourselves.*

Dr. Brown presents us with some admirable remarks illustrative of the manner in which individuals, whose moral principles were once correct, become involved in guilt and remorse, before they have any suspicion of danger. They would repel, perhaps, any temptation to fraud, or injustice; but what is called social pleasure presents a different aspect. It comes in a very alluring shape to all whose minds are not armed against its seductions, by the higher enjoyments which religion affords; while that shape appears scarcely

* This part of my manuscript was prepared before I was fortunate enough to see the account which is given of the nature of conscience by a very highly esteemed friend, the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw, in his late excellent work on the state of the heathen. I felt that it was due to the acknowledged talents of that writer to reconsider the statements given above. With the general principles of that admirable little work I most cordially concur; but on the particular point to which this note refers I did not see cause to alter my opinion.

even questionable. But pleasure once made the object of pursuit, soon becomes the business of life. It hurries into dissipation and vice; and the individual who, on the commencement of his career, saw no images save those of social enjoyment, may, in after life, have to retrace years heedlessly and uselessly passed, with the astonishment, though not with the comfort, of one who looks back on some frightful dream, and who scarcely knows whether he is awake.

The value of the blessing denoted by the words, "a good conscience," is inexpressibly great. Dr. Brown says, it is the only object of desire that is truly universal; and certain it is, that though depraved propensities may invest pleasure with attractions so alluring as to induce individuals to purchase them even at the expense of rousing the monitor within, yet all men dread his expostulations—all would gladly have the approbation of conscience, though all have not the principle and fortitude to do what is necessary to secure it.

## Class III.

### *Prospective Emotions, comprehending those which relate to Objects as future.*

The two classes of emotions denoted by the words Desires and Fears, include all the feelings of the kind we are about to consider. "They are the most important of all our emotions, from their direct influence on action, which our other feelings influence only indirectly through the medium of them."

"Desire," says Mr. Locke," is the uneasiness a man feels in himself upon the absence of any thing whose present enjoyment carries the idea of good in it." This definition appears to me scarcely correct. The uneasy sensation, of which Locke speaks, is rather

that which precedes desire, than desire itself. The mere destitution of good will produce uneasiness, but not desire, unless there be some knowledge of the cause of the uneasiness. The emotion of desire itself is a feeling of pleasure, not of pain. Dr. Brown has not attempted to define the words desire and fear; but he has stated all that is necessary to be said, and perhaps all that can be said, upon the subject. "Our desires arise from the prospect of what is agreeable in itself, or from the prospect of relief from what is disagreeable. Our fears arise from the prospect of what is disagreeable in itself, and from the prospect of the loss of what is in itself agreeable." If, then, our desires are excited by the prospect of that which is conceived to be good, and our fears by what is deemed evil, where is the propriety of the dissertation into which he immediately enters, to shew that what he calls the object of our desires and fears, may be the same; so that it is unnecessary to consider them separately? What does he intend by the *object* of desire and fear? If by that term be meant that which *excites* the emotions, it is manifest that the object of desire and fear is not alike; in the one case it is good, in the other evil. If it be meant that the same *being* or *circumstance* may produce either desire, or fear, or both, there can be no doubt of the correctness of the statement; but as this being or circumstance must be contemplated in different lights, when both emotions are awakened, the thing feared and desired, or the *object* of the desire and fear, is different. Let us examine his own illustration: "We hope that we shall attain to a situation of which we are ambitious; we fear that we shall not attain to it. We fear that some misfortune, which seems to threaten us, may reach us; we hope that we shall be able to escape.

Here the hope and the fear, opposite as the emotions are, arise from the same objects, the one or the other prevailing according to the greater or less probability on either side." Now it is admitted that, in a popular sense, the objects may, perhaps, be said to be the same; but surely not in a philosophical sense. In the first case, the object of desire is success; the object of fear defeat. In the latter case the descent of the misfortune is the object of fear; and escape from it the object of desire. And even when the presence of the same being awakens both of the emotions, it can only be said, in a popular sense, that the object of the desire, and of the fear, is the same. We desire the continued esteem of a friend—we fear to lose it. The permanent possession of a good is the object in one case—the permanent loss of it the object in the other. And to maintain that the *object* of desire and fear is the same, because the *being* before us is the same, appears to me almost as great a mistake as to allege that the object of sight and of smell is the same, because the cause of both the sensations is to be found in the single rose before us.

From the preceding account of the nature of desire, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that the emotion thus designated is only awakened by that which *appears* to us good. We employ this phraseology on the ground that, to secure the existence of desire, it is not necessary that the object *be* good, either in a moral or physical point of view; but merely that it be *so regarded* by the mind which contemplates it. It is neither morally nor physically good, *i.e.* when the future as well as the present is considered, to indulge to excess in the pleasures of the table; but it appears good, in the latter sense, to those who shut out of view every moment but the present; they are,

accordingly, drunkards, or gluttons. This is admitted by Dr. Brown. "To desire," he says, "it is essential that the object appear good."—"What we do not desire may be conceived by us to be good, relatively to others who desire it, but cannot seem to be good relatively to us."* I have been more desirous to lay before the reader this statement by Dr. Brown, because, on the subject of desire, I am constrained, after long-continued and anxious thought, to differ very materially from him, on a point of some importance in itself, and of greatly more importance, when all its consequences and bearings are properly considered.

From the language employed by Dr. Brown, "To desire, it is essential that the object appear good," we might have expected to hear him state that, in our conceptions at least, the object desired must possess some excellence of a moral or physical nature,—that the conception of this excellence precedes the desire, and is, in fact, the cause of it. Nothing, however, can be more opposite than this, from the doctrine of this distinguished writer. The good which is essential to desire is, he tells us, desirableness; and desirableness does not necessarily involve the consideration of moral or physical good;—"it is the relation of certain objects to certain emotions, and nothing more"—"the tendency of certain objects," in consequence of the nature of the mind, "to be followed by that particular feeling which we term desire." It follows, from this statement, that the good which Dr. Brown calls desirableness, is not the power of the object desired to yield satisfaction. Accordingly he tells us it is not. Objects do not appear desirable to us because they yield pleasure, for they would have been desirable had they yielded none—the pleasure they impart is the result, not the cause,

* Vol. III. p. 373.

of the desire. And, again, in a longer statement, he says, "We desire, indeed, all these objects, and, however ill fitted some of them may appear to be productive of delight, we may perhaps feel pleasure in all these objects,—as we certainly should feel pain, if we were not to obtain what we desire, whatever the object of desire may have been; but it is not the pleasure which was the circumstance which prompted our desire when it arose,—it was the desire previously awakened, which was accompanied with pleasure, or was productive of pleasure—the pleasure being in all these cases the effect of the previous desire, and necessarily presupposing it."*

The same doctrine had been previously affirmed by Dr. Price, from whom, indeed, Dr. Brown seems to have borrowed it. His language is the following: "I cannot help in this place, stepping aside a little to take notice of an opinion already referred to; I mean the opinion of those who allow of no ultimate object of desire besides private good. What has led to this opinion has been inattention to the difference between desire, and the pleasure implied in the gratification of it. The latter is subsequent to the former, and founded in it: that is, an object, such as fame, knowledge, or the welfare of a friend, is desired, not because we foresee that when obtained, it will give us pleasure; but *vice versa;* obtaining it give us pleasure, because we previously desired it or had an affection carrying us to it, and resting in it. And were there no such affections, the very foundations of happiness would be destroyed."†

The more common doctrine on this subject most unquestionably is, that desire is kindled by that which is good—by what is rendered good to us either by our physical constitution, or our moral state. I shall

* Vol. III. p. 407. † *Vide* Review, p. 118.

proceed to mention some of the difficulties in which the system of Drs. Brown and Price is involved.

*First*, that system mistakes, I imagine, the real cause of the pleasure, which the objects of our desires afford us. This, indeed, appears to me the radical error. Objects afford pleasure, such is the doctrine, *because* they have been previously desired; without previous desire they could yield none; thus desire is the spring of all the enjoyments of man. Let us try this doctrine in relation to sensitive pleasures. There are certain odours, tastes, and sounds, which are universally pleasing. Why are they so? The proper answer would appear to be, that they are rendered so by the constitution of the mind. The very first time we experience them they yield pleasure, or rather they are themselves happy states of mind; they need no previous states to render them so. But, according to the doctrine opposed, the sensation of sweetness, for instance, must be desired before it can be agreeable, and this previous desire *renders* it agreeable. To my apprehension, I acknowledge, this is reversing the natural order of things. Certain sensations are by nature agreeable; their return is desired, and desired *because* they are agreeable. What the Creator of the mind has rendered agreeable to it, he has inspired a desire to enjoy. The order opposed, however, is the exact reverse of this. Certain desires after certain sensations exist, in consequence of which desires, the sensations are agreeable. And, since all desires suppose the knowledge of their objects,—for we can no more desire without desiring something, than regret without regretting something,—it follows that the mind has the knowledge of external objects, or of the sensations they produce, previous to any experience of the sensations.

The views of both these writers appear to have been governed by the circumstance, that we feel pain when we do not obtain the object of our desire. That pain could not have existed, it is assumed, without the previous existence of the desire; and it is hence inferred that the pleasure we enjoy when the object is obtained, is the result of the desire, or rather produced by it. The conclusion here would not, however, be a legitimate one, even if the premises were granted. It is possible that desire may be an invariable accompaniment of the pleasure, without being the cause of it. Certain objects may be the source of pleasure to the mind, in consequence of its physical constitution or moral state. They would have been the source of pleasure, if the susceptibility of desire had not formed an element of the mental constitution. That susceptibility may have been implanted, not to constitute, according to the statements of Drs. Brown and Price, the spring of all the enjoyments of man; but to secure the active pursuit of those objects, which have been so adapted to the nature of the mind, as to minister those enjoyments. It may be true that, in adult age, we receive pleasure from no object which had not been previously desired; because desire is an invariable concomitant of our conception of an object as good. But it is surely the object which is the cause of the pleasure, and not the desire. The system opposed appears to represent all objects as naturally indifferent to the mind. We might smell a rose, taste the juice of the peach, obtain knowledge, live in society, without deriving pleasure from one or the other, if we had not the susceptibility of desire. "*They give us pleasure because we previously desired them*," says Dr. Price; so that the desire, and not the object, is the cause of the pleasure. The true state of the case

appears, on the contrary, to me to be, that certain objects are the sources of pleasure to the mind, in consequence of its physical constitution or its moral state, and that a susceptibility of desiring these objects has been implanted within us to stimulate us to pursue them.

*Secondly*, the statement of Dr. Brown does not appear to supply a solution of the fact, that dissatisfaction often succeeds the acquisition of the object of desire. If desire be the cause of the pleasure which the objects of our pursuit give us, pleasure ought invariably to result from their acquisition. The effect should always succeed the cause. Our hope of obtaining the object we desire might indeed be disappointed, but we could not experience disappointment *in* it. To allege that, when obtained, it does not answer our expectation, is to give up the system. It is to admit that the pleasure is not the result of the desire—that it is the consequence of the adaptation of an object to our mental or moral nature; so that, where this adaptation does not exist, no degree of previous desire can impart to any object the power of conferring happiness, when its nature becomes fully known to us.

*Thirdly*, the statements of Dr. Brown appear to be at variance with the fact, that the objects of desire are not merely exceedingly numerous, but that, in many cases, they stand in direct opposition to each other. The sensations of men are, for the most part, alike. What is scarlet, or bitter, or fragrant to one, is so to another; but what is desirable to one, is often not desirable to another. Yet, if the opinion of Dr. Brown,—"that it is the very nature of the mind, as originally constituted with certain tendencies, that some objects should appear to it immediately

desirable,"—be correct, how should there be this dissimilarity? How could our emotions, in this case, be more susceptible of change, than our sensations? I grant that desire *is* susceptible of change; but on this fact I build an argument, that it does not arise in the manner stated by Dr. Brown. If there be an original tendency in any object to awaken desire, (a tendency which is independent of any view which the mind takes of it as adapted to give pleasure,) it appears to me, that this tendency must operate as uniformly in producing desire, as the tendency of a body to give us a certain sensation, is uniformly followed, when the body is brought into contact with the appropriate organ, by that sensation. I cannot account for the great diversity of human desires, without supposing that desire follows the notion of good, or is awakened by the expectation of pleasure; in that case, the different mental attainments, and moral habits of men, sufficiently explain the circumstance.

*Fourthly,* the change which is effected in the desires of the same individual, in consequence of the different views he is led to form of the influence of various objects and events upon his happiness, seems to me incompatible with the statements of Dr. Brown. Medicine is presented to a sick person—he does not desire it. Its probable influence in removing his disease is explained to him—he now *does* desire it. Can it be doubted that, in this case, the view of private good excited the desire? There are cases, also, in which so mighty a moral revolution takes place in the mind, that almost all the things which had been formerly desired, become objects of dislike and avoidance! How is this, unless we suppose that, in consequence of the production of a different taste, the former objects of desire are no longer felt to be good, and,

therefore, no longer desired? How can the fact be reconciled with the doctrine which affirms that certain objects are naturally desirable, as certain others are naturally sweet, or bitter, or fragrant? In short, it will be found, I imagine, impossible to account for the phænomena of desire, without supposing that the emotion is originally awakened by that which is thought likely to minister to our happiness—that, to render an object desirable, it must have, or be conceived to have, a permanent quality of goodness. I mean not that it must "appear good" in the sense which Dr. Brown attaches to the words; but that it must possess some conceived quality of a physical or moral nature, which is, in itself, adapted to promote our enjoyment. In this manner only, I apprehend, can the emotion be *originally* awakened; though I am willing to concede that it may now arise without any thought of personal pleasure, through the influence of suggestion. The conception of the object, and the desire, have so frequently existed simultaneously, that the latter state may instantly follow the former, by the ordinary laws of suggestion, without that intervening thought of pleasure, which was necessary, at first, to connect them together. The desire of wealth may now arise without any thought of the pleasures which wealth procures, through the influence of the same laws; yet it cannot surely be doubted, that it was originally produced by a conception of the honour, and influence, and happiness, which it secures to its possessor.

*Finally*, it is worthy of our inquiry, whether the sentiments of Dr. Brown are not embarrassed by powerful difficulties of a moral nature. When the desires of men are placed upon forbidden objects, we admit that this fact does not implicate the holiness of the Divine Being, since it is the result of their

depravity, leading them to call that which is evil, good; and hence to desire it. But if the various objects of desire are immediately desirable, and do not become so by means of our conception of their adaptation to minister to our good,—and if they are rendered thus immediately desirable by the physical constitution of the mind,—where must the blame be cast, but upon that God who created the mind, and gave it all its natural tendencies? How can a man be censured, if this be the case, for desiring what is evil, any more than for tasting gall to be bitter, and honey sweet?

I cannot avoid suspecting that Dr. Brown has confounded two things which are surely not identical; *viz.* the pleasure which is involved in the act of desiring, and the pleasure which the object desired affords, when our efforts to obtain it are successful. I am led to form this opinion by one of his own illustrations. "We do not love for the sake of the pleasure of loving; in like manner we do not desire for the sake of the pleasure of desiring." This is doubtless true; yet it does not follow, from hence, that we do not desire an object for the sake of the happiness *it* will yield when obtained. That is a totally different thing. To make the illustration bear upon the case in hand, it is incumbent upon Dr. Brown to shew, not merely that we do not love for the sake of the pleasure of loving, but that our love to any object precedes the feeling of any of its qualities as agreeable to us, and even renders them agreeable. Few, however, will venture to assert this. Love is attracted by qualities which, in consequence of our mental constitution, or moral state, are felt to be agreeable to us. Desire, in like manner, which is, perhaps, nothing more than love itself, modified by the thought of the object as absent,

and by regret on that account, is awakened by the conception of the happiness which would result from its possession.

If Dr. Brown be in error on the subject of desire, his mistake is radically different, in its nature, from that into which Mr. Jeffery appears to have fallen in his late celebrated article on Phrenology. In the opinion of Mr. J. the mere apprehension of good, would necessarily excite hope or desire, without what he calls a faculty of desire; *i. e.* according to the phraseology which we adopt, without a distinct susceptibility of experiencing the emotion of hope or desire. Dr. Brown supposes, on the other hand, that the emotion may arise without a previous apprehension of good. Both appear to me to be mistaken. The mere apprehension of good would not originate the emotion of desire, without a distinct susceptibility; the susceptibility would not, on the other hand, be developed, without the apprehension of good.

Now as desire is excited by the idea of good, we may admit as many classes of desires, as there are species of good to be expected and desired. The classification, then, which we adopt, is not built upon any radical difference in the emotion itself, but in the objects which excite it.

Yet though desire, whatever be its object, is radically the same emotion, it may exist in different degrees or gradations, which may be very properly marked by distinctive names, such as wish, hope, expectation, confidence, &c.

By most preceding writers the terms just mentioned have been regarded as representative of so many radically different emotions; at any rate, they have not been considered as merely denoting *different degrees of the same emotion*. "Desire," we have been

told, "always implies that the object desired is attainable; and this remark," it is added, "suggests an important distinction between wish and desire. Wish has been sometimes termed inactive desire. Desire has been considered as the union of wish and hope. A man may wish what he has no hope of obtaining; because hope, if rational, always supposes the possibility of the attainment of the object. Wish, like desire, may arise from the view of something good; but because that good is not deemed attainable, it does not call forth activity and effort. A beggar may wish to be a king, and a man to fly; but in neither case can it be said that these things are desired. A wish may refer to the past; but desire invariably regards the future. A sick man may be said to wish for health; but we do not say he desires it. He desires to use the means requisite for attaining it, because they are within his reach. But the success of those means does not depend upon his power, and therefore, he is only said to wish for it."

Now, it is conceded, that this writer has stated, with sufficient accuracy, *the manner in which these terms are employed*—and shewn that they could not, in the various cases supposed, be substituted for each other. But he has failed to prove that the words wish, desire, hope, &c. denote emotions generically distinct; because, marking as they do, different degrees of the same feeling, they are obviously incapable of transposition. The desire of a beggar to be a king is so powerfully repressed by a conviction of the impossibility of attaining to the possession of regal power, that it has not opportunity to grow, so to speak, into hope; he merely wishes it; it is desire in the positive degree. The illustration of Dr. Brown is, we think, perfectly conclusive on this point. "Our

hopes, wishes, expectations, &c. do not form classes of feelings essentially distinct from our general emotions of desire; but are merely those emotions themselves in all their variety, according as we conceive that there is more or less likelihood of our obtaining the particular objects which we are desirous of obtaining. In a competition of any kind, in which there are many candidates, there is perhaps some one candidate who is aware that he has very little interest, and who has, therefore, scarcely more than a mere wish of success. He canvasses the electors, and he finds, to his surprise, perhaps, that many votes are given to him. He no longer wishes merely, he hopes; and, with every new vote that is promised, his hope grows more vivid. A very few votes additional, convert the hope into expectation; and, when a decided majority is engaged to him by promise, even expectation is too weak a word to express the emotion which he feels;—it is trust, confidence, reliance, or whatever other word we may choose to express that modification of desire which is not the joy of absolute certainty, like the actual attainment of an agreeable object, and yet scarcely can be said to differ from certainty. In this series of emotions, nothing has occurred to modify them, but a mere increase of probability in the successive stages; and the same scale of probabilities which admits of being thus accurately measured, in an election that is numbered by votes, exists truly, though perhaps less distinctly, in every other case of desire, in which we rise from a mere wish, to the most undoubting confidence."*

The word Desire may, then, be regarded as a general term, inclusive of all our emotions of this

* P. 386.

kind, whatever be their objects or gradations. Wish, hope, expectation, confidence, merely exhibit different degrees of intensity in the same feeling. It is, therefore, perfectly correct, philosophically speaking, to say that a beggar *desires* to be a king—his *wish* to enjoy regal power is *desire*—though we cannot say he hopes to possess it; hope is desire in the comparative degree, and to that degree of the emotion he has not attained.

It may here be observed, that whatever be the object of desire, the general feeling admits of all the gradations to which we have now referred. We may wish, hope, expect, &c. to obtain knowledge, or wealth, or honour. Dr. Brown states, that when our desires become very vivid, or very permanent, they are called passions, which constitute thus no distinct class of feelings.

The term desire is said to be sometimes synonimous with command. This is the case when the expression of desire should carry with it the force of a command; as when a parent desires his child to perform a certain action; so that, in fact, there is no change in the meaning of the word.

The preceding statements lead me to advert a little to the nature of the will, or the power of volition, as it is called. I shall first, however, glance at the doctrines which have been propounded in relation to it.

By most writers on Mental Science, the will has been regarded as a distinct and an original power of the mind. Mr. Locke gives us the following description of volition. "It is," says he, "an act of the mind knowingly exerting that dominion it takes itself to have over any part of the man, by employing it in, or withholding it from, any particular action." This

is, indeed, rather a definition of what writers of this class would consider an *act* of the will, than of the will itself; but it intimates, with sufficient clearness, the notion he entertained of the latter.

Dr. Reid is more explicit. "Every man," says he, "is conscious of a power to determine in things which he conceives to depend upon his determinations. To this power we give the name of Will; and, as it is usual in the operations of the mind to give the same name to the power, and to the act of that power, the term Will is often put to signify the act of determining, which more properly is called volition. Volition, therefore, signifies the act of willing and determining; and will is put indifferently to signify either the power of willing, or the act." The same author tells us that, "by preceding writers, the term Will was made to signify not only our determination to act or not to act, but every motive or excitement to action,"*—a fact which shews how little regard was formerly paid to precision; since the error is not less than that which confounds the rose, with the sensation of fragrance produced by it, or even with the power of sensation itself.

Having thus exhibited the will as a distinct faculty of the mind, Dr. Reid proceeds to state that it differs, in various respects, from desire; and is, in some cases, directly opposed to it. He speaks, indeed, of three acts of the mind—an act of will, of desire, and of command—which are sometimes confounded, but which he affirms to be different; and he thus develops his views with respect to the nature of that difference. "What we will," he says, "must be an action, and our own action; what we desire may not be our own

* Vol. III. p. 71.

action, it may be no action at all. We may be said to desire meat, or drink, but not to will it. A man desires that his children may be happy, and that they may behave well. Their being happy is no action at all; their behaving well is no action of his, but theirs."

And even with respect to our own actions, there is said to be a distinction between desire and will; for we may desire what we do not will, and will what we do not desire; nay, what we have a great aversion to.

Command is thus distinguished from will. The object of will, is some action of our own; the object of command, some action of another person. Command is also a social act of the mind, having no existence but by a communication of thought, to some intelligent being; and implying, therefore, a belief that there is such a being. Desire and will are said, on the contrary, to be solitary acts, which do not imply any such communication or belief.*

Some of the preceding statements appear to me unfounded, and others to convey little or no meaning. "Command is a social act of the mind;" what is the meaning of "command" here? Is the term intended to denote that state of mind which directly prompts the words in which the command is issued? On two accounts it is impossible that this can be the meaning of Dr. Reid; first, such a state of mind is no more a social act of the mind than an act of desire, or an act of will; secondly, Dr. Reid adds, that a command can have no existence but by a communication of thought to some intelligent being. Now an act or state of mind, prompting *to* the communication of thought, cannot exist *by* the communication. It is perfectly manifest that by "command" Dr. Reid meant, the

* *Vide* Vol. III. p. 77.

words in which the command is embodied. In this sense a command may be allowed to be a social act; but, unfortunately for the Doctor's system, it is an act of the organs of speech, and not an act of the mind at all. To represent command, indeed, as an act of the mind, is to use words without meaning. A command is a desire, or a determination, or volition, embodied in words. No command exists till this determination is clothed in a verbal dress; previous to the moment in which it is thus clothed, it differs in no respect from our other, and our ordinary volitions.

The doctrine of Dr. Brown on this subject is radically different. A volition, according to his statements, is a desire springing up in peculiar circumstances, and so appropriating to itself a particular name; it supposes, therefore, no distinct and original faculty—nothing more than that general susceptibility which is the source of all our emotions of this class. On various accounts certain actions, *i. e.* certain motions of some of the bodily members, may be regarded in the light of a good, and so become objects of desire. But as the actual motions follow instantly, by Divine appointment, our desires to perform them, these desires perish, of course, in the moment of their birth. It is to desires of this kind that we give the name of Volitions; but they are not specifically different from our permanent desires—all of which, but for the circumstance of their permanence, would be denominated volitions. "We are said," says Dr. Brown, "to desire wealth, and to will the motion of our hand; but if the motion of our hand had not followed the desire of moving it, we should then have been said not to will, but to desire its motion;" as, we may add, is the case with a paralytic. "The distance, or the

immediate attainableness of the good, is thus the sole difference; but, as the words are at present used, they have served to produce a belief, that of the same immediate good, in the case of any simple bodily movement, there are both a desire and a volition; that the will which moves the hand, for instance, is something different from the desire of moving it,—the one particular motion being preceded by two feelings, a volition, and a desire. Of this complex mental process, however, we have no consciousness;—the desire of moving a limb, in the usual circumstances of health and freedom, being always directly followed by its motion."*

I have little doubt that the doctrine of Dr. Brown will ultimately approve itself to the judgment of every candid man. It is supported by the evidence of consciousness. What is that volition (as it is called) to move the limbs for some specific purpose, but a desire to move them, in order to secure the accomplishment of that purpose?

It will be necessary, however, to examine the arguments on which Dr. Reid grounds his statement, that, even with reference to our own actions, desire and will are not identical. This is rendered more especially necessary, by the appearance of a note attached to Mr. Dugald Stewart's third volume of "Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind,"—a note which, on Mr. Stewart's account, is to be regretted. There is, perhaps, no one who would not concede to this distinguished writer, that his judgment on any point in mental science is entitled to high consideration; but it is painful to see that, in opposing an opinion of Dr. Brown, Mr. Stewart does not

* Cause and Effect, pp. 52-3.

seem to think it necessary for him to say more, than to pronounce that opinion "a slip"—taking no notice whatever of the argument by which it is supported. On referring again to the note, I find I must correct myself. Mr. Stewart does say more. He tells us that he took the trouble, many years ago, to point out this error to Dr. Brown; and he further expresses his regret that the latter should, in these circumstances, have been so unreasonable as not to abandon it! Whether this is the precise style which even Mr. Stewart is entitled to hold with regard to Dr. Brown, the philosophical world will doubtless form its own opinion.

The substance of Mr. Locke's objection against the doctrine that desire and will are synonimous terms, to which Mr. Stewart refers, is contained in the statements of Dr. Reid, which we now proceed to examine. "We may desire," he says, "what we do not will, and will what we do not desire." In support of this assertion, he adds—"A man athirst has a strong desire to drink, but for some particular reason he determines not to gratify his desire. A judge, from a regard to justice, and to the duty of his office, dooms a criminal to die, while from humanity, or particular affection, he desires that he should live. A man, for health, may take a nauseous draught, for which he has no desire, but a great aversion. Desire, therefore, even when its object is some action of our own, is only an incitement to will, but it is not volition. The determination of the mind may be not to do what we desire to do. But as desire is often accompanied by will, we are apt to overlook the distinction between them."*

* Vol. III. pp. 75-6.

On these statements I observe,

*First*, that they appear to be self-contradictory, even on Dr. Reid's own principles. Granting, for the sake of argument, that volition and desire are two distinct and original principles, it will not be denied by him that both are awakened by the conception of good. We will, that which appears good; we desire, that which appears good. How, then, can that good which produces volition, fail to excite desire? How can the determination of the mind be to do what we do not desire to do? If the man *wills* to take the medicine, does he not *desire*, all things considered, to take it? Is it not better for him, upon the whole, to take it, than to refrain from taking it? Does he not think so? In a state of health it might be an evil to take the medicine, but in the hour of sickness it becomes a good; and yet, Dr. Reid would have us believe, that, regarding as he must do the neglect of the medicine as an evil, he yet desires to neglect it; *i.e.* in other terms, he is averse to that which appears good, and desires that which appears evil. *Credit Judæus Apella!*

*Secondly*, I observe, that the statements of Dr. Reid proceed, it is conceived, on a misunderstanding of the cases to which he refers. There is an opposition, he affirms, between will and desire, in the cases just mentioned. To this it is replied, that there may be an opposition between the *ultimate* volition to take the medicine, pass the sentence, &c., and the *habitual* desires of these individuals—yea, an opposition between this volition, and the almost immediately preceding desire; but there can be no opposition, it is imagined, between this volition, at the moment when it exists, and the desire of the individual at that moment. They must then agree; they

are identical. "The determination of the mind," says Dr. Brown, "never is, and never can be, to do what, in the particular circumstances of the moment, we do not desire to do. When we take a nauseous draught, there is a dislike, indeed, of the sensation which follows the motion," (*i. e.* of taking it,) "but there is no dislike of the motion itself, which alone depends upon our will, and which is desired by us, not from any love of the disagreeable sensation that follows it,"—"but from our greater dislike of that continuance of bad health, which we suppose to be the probable consequence of omitting the motion. The desire of moving the hand, and the muscles of deglutition,—or, to use a word which Dr. Reid would have preferred, the *will* to move them,—is a state of mind as different, and as distinguishable, from the dislike of bad health, as from the dislike of the draught. It is a new feeling, to which a wide view of many circumstances has given birth,—a desire not of pleasure in the draught, but of less evil, in one of two unavoidable evils."*

This is Dr. Brown's "slip." I confess I should be glad to meet with many of a similar kind, in the writings of other philosophers. It will not be necessary to examine at length the other instances adduced by Dr. Reid: we shall briefly refer to them. A judge, he argues, wills the death of a criminal, but he does not desire it; and, therefore, will and desire are not synonimous terms. We answer, he did not desire it a short time previous to the moment in which he passed the sentence. Two things, before the ultimate decision of his mind, appeared good to him—to spare the offender —and to preserve his character as an upright judge. After struggling for the ascendency for some time,

* Cause and Effect, pp. 62-3.

perhaps, the latter consideration triumphed; it appeared desirable to him, upon the whole, to pass the sentence, and from that desire the sentence actually flowed. There is here then no opposition between will and desire. Dr. Reid has evidently confounded the habitual desire of the judge, or his desire a short time previous to his ultimate decision, with the desire of the moment, when, as the mouth of the law, he warned the criminal to prepare for his approaching fate.

Again, in the case of an individual compelled to support a weight in his outstretched arm, under fear of a more painful punishment if he draw it back, Dr. Reid contends that there is an opposition between will and desire. "He wills," says he, "the very pain which he does not desire." This statement, we reply, is unfounded even on his own principles;—the pain not being an action of his own, not being even an action at all, the individual cannot, according to Dr. Reid's own account of volition,* be said to will it. And the fact is that, on no principles, can the pain be the direct object of volition. The thing directly determined upon is, not the endurance of pain, but the continued extension of the arm. He wills this as the least of two evils; and, surely, if there were a distinction between will and desire, he must desire it too; or it would follow, that the mind is constituted to desire a great evil, rather than a comparatively insignificant one.

The preceding statements explain the language of the apostle, "For what I would, that do I not." Some individuals, imbibing the principles of Dr. Reid, have maintained, from this passage, that Christians sometimes commit sin in opposition to their wills at

* Vide p. 424.

the very moment of committing it! They seem to imagine that the object of temptation, operating upon depraved propensities, stimulates desire, and that desire becomes at length so vehement, as to draw them into rebellion, although volition is actually on the side of rectitude. The doctrine advanced in the preceding pages, proves that this can never be the case. The desire to perform the sinful action, in consequence of which it is performed, is the will to perform it. The habitual will of a Christian may be on the side of obedience; it actually is so. Where this is not the case, the Christian *character* does not exist; but to affirm that the will is on the side of obedience, at the moment of disobedience, is to give utterance to a sentiment, all the absurdities involved in which I cannot now stop to unfold. There can be no rational doubt that the opposition which is too frequently found to exist between the habitual and occasional determinations of Christians, is the subject of affirmation in the passage to which reference has been made.

There is, then, no radical difference between will and desire. The former term is, indeed, a very convenient word to denote "those desires which have instant termination in a muscular motion, which is their object; and to distinguish them from such as relate to objects not directly and immediately attainable, and, therefore, not accompanied with the belief of direct and immediate attainment; but still it must not be forgotten, that the mental part of the sequence, the momentary feeling, which exists in our consciousness alone, and ceases almost as soon as it arises, is a desire that differs not from our other desires, more than those others mutually differ."*

* Cause and Effect, p. 55—57.

The important bearing of this view of the nature of the will, or of volition, upon the philosophical question of Liberty and Necessity, as well as upon certain keenly contested theological topics, will be apparent to all my readers. Such is the constitution of the mind, that every thing which appears good, (and many things *appear* good, or the contrary, *according to the moral state of an individual),* excites the emotion of desire; *i. e.* it produces what we call volition, when the desire terminates in muscular action. It produces volition, for the same reason that the odoriferous particles of a rose, originate the sensation of sweetness, *viz.* because God has so formed the mind, that the events to which we have now referred, shall ever be in immediate sequence. In connexion with this view of the matter, how is it, then, possible to hold the notion of the self-determining power of the will? Mr. Stewart might well say that Dr. Brown's doctrines, on the subject of volition, if true, "settle the question concerning the liberty of the will." For who would even think of talking of the self-determining power of desire—the self-determining power of love, hope, joy—the self-determining power of sensation, &c.? A volition, or determination, when freed from the mystery in which it has been too generally involved, is found to be nothing more than a desire—a state of mind which can no more arise without a cause, than a sensation, or perception;—and a state of mind, which must as infallibly arise, I may add, in the circumstances which are adapted to produce it, as the feeling of fragrance, when the odoriferous particles of a rose are brought into contact with the organ. To say that the mind possesses a self-determining power, is to affirm that volition, *i. e.* desire, may exist without a cause, (and if any thing can exist

without a cause, why may not the universe itself?)—that the mind may be affected without any thing to affect it, and drawn without any thing to draw it. To maintain that, when it appears to us *better*, upon the whole, to put certain muscles in motion, than to allow them to remain at rest, no desire, *i. e.* no volition to move them may arise, is equivalent with the declaration that, when the particles of the rose are brought into contact with the organ, in a sound state, there may be no sensation. To exhibit it as a matter of choice with us whether we will submit to the influence of motives, when their moral power is discerned by the mind, is equivalent with stating that the mind chooses whether it will receive sensation in the case referred to—than which few things can be more absurd. To submit mentally to the influence of inducements to virtuous conduct, can mean nothing more than to have volition, *i.e.* desire, awakened by them. To *choose* to submit to their influence is, therefore, to will, *i. e.* desire, the existence of will or desire; it is *to choose to choose* to practise the conduct enjoined.

There is not much reason to doubt that the bearing of Dr. Brown's statements upon this subject is partly the reason, at any rate, of Mr. Stewart's attack upon them. They certainly "settle the question concerning the liberty of the will," but they do it in a manner which is not the most agreeable to the latter gentleman. "The philosophical speculations of the Scotch metaphysicians," says the Rev. J. Gilbert,* (including in his charge Dr. Reid, Mr. Stewart, &c., and most absurdly, as well as unjustly, connecting Dr. Brown with them,) are adapted to subvert the theological

* *Vide* Memoirs of Dr. E. Williams, Note.

creed of their country." The statements of Dr. B. must be especially obnoxious to him.

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*CONSIDERATION OF OUR PARTICULAR DESIRES.*

THE DESIRE OF CONTINUED EXISTENCE.

This is not very commonly included in the catalogues of our desires; though, as it is one of the most general of our prospective emotions, it is not a little singular that it should have been omitted. It has, perhaps, been thought that existence is not a good *per se;* and so does not merit, any more than gold, a place among what we regard as the natural objects of desire. I am, however, disposed to think that life is, in itself, regarded as a blessing; so that existence, *as mere existence,* may be desired: hence the tenacity with which some individuals cling to life, even when it is to them a cup of almost unmingled bitterness. Existence is, however, doubtless chiefly valuable to us "as that which may be *rendered happy;*" and, therefore, we sometimes find a recklessness of life, among those who are bereft of hope, as well as happiness—a recklessness which sometimes leads them to court danger, and, not unfrequently, to lay violent hands upon themselves.

And, if a susceptibility of this desire constitutes a part of our physical constitution, the desire of life cannot be improper in itself. It is, doubtless, unjustifiable when it is not kept within due bounds—when it becomes the paramount and governing principle—when it leads us to neglect duty, and, *à fortiori,* to commit sin for the purpose of preserving it;—and when the approaching glories of eternity do not

render us even willing, if it be the appointment of God, "to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better."

So far, indeed, is the love of life from being in itself improper, that it is a principle of great practical importance and utility. "Its existence bespeaks," says Dr. Brown, "the kindness of that Being, who, in giving to man duties which he has to continue for many years to discharge, in a world which is preparatory for the nobler world that is afterwards to receive him, has not left him to feel the place in which he is to perform the duties allotted to him, as a place of barren and gloomy exile." To a Christian, who has attained "the full assurance of hope," how intolerable must this exile have appeared, had it not been counterbalanced, in some degree, by the love of life; if duty had not been neglected, how much of that interest, and ardour, and zeal, which is happily now sometimes manifested, might never have been displayed!

## THE DESIRE OF SOCIETY.

"Man is born in society," says Dr. Brown, "dependent on it for the preservation of his infant being, and for the comfort and happiness of his existence in other years. It is to be the source of all the love which he feels, of all the love which he excites, and, therefore, of almost all the desires and enjoyments which he is capable of feeling. He owes to it," he afterwards tells us, "all his strength, as well as all his happiness." "Man," says another writer, "has many feelings to gratify by associating with other beings possessing intelligence and thought; and the pleasure connected with their gratification would lead him,

independently of an original desire for society, to seek for the means of this enjoyment."*

From statements like these we might have expected the conclusion to be drawn, that we have no original desire of society. Were there indeed reason to suppose that society, without the existence of such a desire, would not be preserved, nor even formed, we should be constrained to embrace the opinion that God has rendered us the instinctive subjects of an emotion which is so important to our existence, as well as to our happiness. But if the enjoyments which society brings would lead us to seek and desire it, it is obviously less certain that we have an original desire of it; because we have less cause for such a desire. Mr. Stewart, however, considers our desire of society instinctive. "Abstracting from those affections which interest us in the happiness of others, and from all the advantages which we ourselves derive from the social union, we are led by a natural and instinctive desire, to associate with our own species." Dr. Brown also says, that "of a society to which man thus owes all his strength, as well as all his happiness, it is not wonderful that nature should have formed him desirous; and it is in harmony with that gracious provision which we have seen realized so effectually in our other emotions, that she has formed him to love the society which profits him, without thinking of the profit which it affords."† I cannot regard it, for the reasons mentioned above, as certain, yet I am not anxious to deny, that God has rendered society, like the fragrance of a rose, delightful *in itself;* so that it may be desired, as soon as the mind can form any conception of it, on its own account, and not

* Dewar's Moral Philosophy, Vol. I. p. 407.

† Vol. III. pp. 420-1.

merely on account of the blessings which follow in its train. Still I conceive it is desired *because* it is delightful. The order of sequence is, I am constrained to think, in opposition to Dr. Brown, the following; *Society gives pleasure* (by virtue of the mental constitution); *and is, therefore, desired*—and not *Society is desired, and, therefore, gives pleasure.* It is observable that Dr. Brown substitutes the word "love," for "desire," in the passage just referred to. He says, "we are formed to love" (not desire) "the society," &c. &c. Now love to an object, as we have seen, does not *precede* the feeling of its qualities as agreeable, and so *render* them agreeable. The desire, or the love, of society cannot *precede* the feeling, or the conception, of its agreeableness, and so *produce* that feeling; for, in that case, it would be rendered a good to us *by* desire, and so could not be desired *as* a good,—the desire having previously arisen. And, in that case, I may further add, every thing that is desired must give pleasure, which is contrary to fact. The truth seems to be, that God has formed us capable of desiring any thing which either is, or appears, good for us, physically or morally considered;—that some things are, by virtue of our mental constitution, physical goods—and that society may be, and probably is, among the number. If this be what is meant by an instinctive desire of society, I have no wish to oppose the statement.

## THE DESIRE OF KNOWLEDGE.

Few principles of our nature are more powerful in their operation than the emotion which we thus designate; nor are there any whose influence is either earlier or later felt. It may bear different names, in

different stages of life;—it may be called curiosity, in the child—and desire to investigate the causes of things, in the sage; but the principle, or the emotion, is the same in all. "It is developed according to the *order* of our wants and necessities; being confined, in the first instance, exclusively to those properties of material objects, and those laws of the material world, an acquaintance with which is essential to the preservation of our animal existence." At a later period of life, no individual is exempt from its influence; yet, either in consequence of constitutional differences, or of diversified circumstances, its operations are strikingly various—an occurrence from which the world is a material gainer, as it lays the foundation of all the advantages derived by society from the division, and subdivision, of intellectual labour.

"The desire of knowledge," says Mr. Stewart, "is not a selfish principle. As the object of hunger is not happiness, but food; so the object of curiosity is not happiness, but knowledge."* Although this phraseology is certainly unusual, and not very definite, Mr. Stewart appears to mean, by the *object* of hunger, and of curiosity, *the thing desired.* Now I fully concede to him, that the direct "objects of desire," in the cases specified, are food and knowledge—that God has made knowledge (like the fragrance of a rose) delightful in itself; so that it may be desired, and frequently is desired, on its own account, and not merely for the sake of the advantages which it secures to its possessor. I cannot, however, concur in the opinion of Dr. Brown, that the desire of knowledge *precedes* the feeling of knowledge as delightful, and *renders* it delightful. "The continuance of an

* Outlines, p. 86.

interesting narrative," says Dr. Brown, "affords pleasure, because it gratifies curiosity." Now as curiosity is nothing but desire, the assertion involves the mistake, as I cannot but regard it, that all objects afford pleasure, because they have been previously desired. The fact, on the contrary, appears to me to be, that, by the constitution of the mind, knowledge, like the flavours, and odours, &c. to which I formerly referred, is agreeable to it; and would have been agreeable, had there been no curiosity or desire. The curiosity is implanted to stimulate to the pursuit of knowledge, not to render it delightful. The tale to which Dr. Brown refers, conveying information, is itself delightful; the mind is so formed that it cannot be otherwise; and, therefore, desire arises to hear its conclusion; because what is delightful to the mind, God has formed the mind to desire. And it is because curiosity, or desire, is thus necessarily awakened to hear the whole of the narrative, of which only a small part has been laid before us, that we are apt to ascribe the pleasure which the remaining part gives, to the curiosity, instead of to the narrative itself, or rather to the knowledge which that narrative conveys.

The results of knowledge are, however, delightful, as well as knowledge itself. The possession of extended information gives a man many advantages over others—lifts him to distinction and honour—enables him to gratify many powerful propensities of his nature; so that, though knowledge may be desired for its own sake, it may also be desired on account of these collateral benefits. It is very possible, accordingly, to imagine that we are pursuing knowledge for its own sake, when, in fact, our activity is stimulated merely by love to its results; and I greatly fear we must make the humbling confession, that comparatively

little of the midnight oil which is consumed in the chase, is a pure and disinterested sacrifice to the love of knowledge. "The connexion," says one, "between the desire of knowledge, and the desire of society, is remarkable; the former is generally, if not always, accompanied with a wish to impart communications to others, and thus curiosity, and the social principles, are united. Hence it has been doubted, whether a man's curiosity would ever be sufficient to engage him in a course of study, if entirely secluded from the enjoyments and the prospects of society." And another writer adds—"The desire of communicating our knowledge is so closely connected with the desire of acquiring it, that few writers have given it a separate consideration. Though the pleasure accompanying it may be traced to the lively exercise of our social affections, or to the feeling of superiority which accompanies the conscious possession of knowledge, it is not the less true that it forms a powerful motive to perseverance in the most laborious study. It might seem, indeed, that the philosopher, whose labours are to benefit future ages rather than his own, is not acting under the influence of this stimulant, and that his only incentives are the desire of knowledge, the wish to do good, and, perhaps, the ambition of posthumous reputation; but even he would not think it worth his while to pursue his studies with so much steadiness and application, if he enjoyed not in hope the satisfaction of enlightening and benefiting his fellow-creatures. He anticipates the future, and, by an illusion not unnatural to man, he spreads his conscious existence over it, as he converses, in his writings, with the people of succeeding generations."*

* Dewar's Moral Philosophy, Vol. I. p. 405.

This emotion is excited by the delight which the God of nature has rendered power capable of affording to the mind, and by all the good which the possession of it can secure to us. We have an original desire of power, if, by that statement it is meant, that power is *per se*, independently of all its grateful train of consequences, delightful to the mind. There is no more mystery in this, than in the fact that light is pleasant to the eye, and the juice of a peach to the taste,—all must be resolved into Divine appointment. The consciousness of power arises on the production of an effect, and the ability to produce effects is a source of happiness, before we have learned that it may be rendered subservient to our enjoyment. "It is not merely," says Dr. Brown, "the noise and the shaking of the rattle that delights the infant, but the shaking of the rattle by his own hands; an event which gives him the consciousness of power, and which, as it cannot delight him from the reflection of any benefit which that power may be made to yield to himself, must be delightful in itself."

The account which this writer has given of the origin and progress of this desire, is singularly beautiful. It begins, according to his statements, with the pleasure produced by the conscious possession of physical energies. The infant is proud of being able to shake the bells of his rattle,—the school-boy, of his power to leap further, or to run faster than his companions. Here superior physical energies of his own, awaken delight; the transition is very easy to superior instruments, or agents. We look on what they do for us, as what we do ourselves, since they are ours, as much as our own limbs are ours. Hence the boy is

proud of having the best top, or bat; "it is a sort of prolongation of the hand which wields it, obeying our will with the same ready ministry as that with which our hands themselves, more directly, move at our bidding." Hence men learn to be proud of having the best horses, dogs, &c. They appropriate their actions to themselves, and so rejoice in their superior power. And, having thus appropriated to themselves the actions of brutes, it is not difficult to appropriate what is done by others of their own species, when they have acted under their control and command. "Every new being," says Dr. Brown, "who obeys us, is thus, as it were, a new faculty, or number of faculties, added to our physical constitution; and it is not wonderful, then, that we should desire to extend the number of these adventitious faculties, more than that we should avail ourselves of the instruments of the optician for quickening our sight, or of a carriage for conveying us over distances, which it would have been impossible for us to travel with the same velocity on foot."*

And as power is thus originally delightful, every thing which puts us in possession of power, and enables us to exercise it, may become an object of desire. Knowledge is directly desirable, being, as we have seen, in itself the source of happiness. But knowledge is also the source of influence. The power possessed by men of distinguished talents and attainments, over others, is prodigious. The empire of Aristotle over the world of mind was, for a long period, not less complete and despotic, than the sway of any of the tyrants of antiquity. Knowledge may be accordingly desired as an instrument of power.

The pleasure which attends the communication of

* Vol. III. p. 448.

knowledge may result from our love of power. The conveyer of a mere article of intelligence, feels himself superior, on this account, to his auditors. He possesses power over them, power to awaken curiosity, to excite fear, to kindle joy or transport.

The gift of eloquence may also be desired on the same principle; for "in no case," says Dr. Dewar, "is the power of man over man more wonderful, and in general more enviable, than in the influence which the orator exercises over the thoughts and passions of a great multitude; while without the force or the splendour of rank, he moves their will, and bends their desire to the accomplishment of his own purpose. This is a power far more elevated than that which only reaches to the bodies of men; it extends to the affections and intentions of the heart, and seems as if it were capable of arresting the trains of our ideas, and of awakening or creating the feelings that are suited to its designs. The conscious possession of a power so vast, and so peculiar, is accompanied with a degree of pleasure proportionably great, and it may be supposed that the pleasure will prompt to the frequent exercise of the superiority from whence it springs."*

Rank, and elevated station, may also be desired on the same principle, for they confer the power "of forcing obedience even upon the reluctant, and, in many cases of winning obedience, from that blind respect which the multitude are always sufficiently disposed to feel for the follies, as for the virtues, of those above them." When the desire of power assumes this shape, it takes the name of ambition;—a word which, together with the state of mind indicated

* Vol. I. p. 421.

by it, is most unpopular; because, in thinking of ambition, "we dwell on the great and visible desolations to which, in a few striking cases, it gives rise,—when the ambitious man has the power of leading armies, and forcing nations to be slaves, and of achieving all that iniquity, which the audacious heart of man may have had the guilt and folly of considering as greatness." It is, however, of great importance to remember the remarks of Dr. Brown. "We forget or neglect, merely because they are less striking than those rare evils, the immediate beneficial influence which the passion is constantly exercising in the conduct of the humbler individuals, whose power, under the preventive guardianship of laws, is limited to actions that scarcely can fail to be of service to the community. All the works of human industry are, in a great measure, referable to an ambition of some sort; that, however humble it may seem to minds of prouder views, is yet relatively as strong as the ambition of the proudest. We toil, that we may have some little influence, or some little distinction, however small the number of our inferiors may be; and the toils which raise to the petty distinction, are toils of public, though humble utility; and even the means of distinction which the opulent possess, are chiefly in the support of those who, but for the pride which supports them, while it seems only to impose on them the luxury of ministering to all the various wants of their luxury, would have little to hope from a charity that might not be easy to be excited by the appearance of mere suffering, in those slight and ordinary degrees, in which it makes its appeal rather to the heart than to the senses. It is this slight influence of the passion, contributing to general happiness, where general happiness is not even an object of

thought, which it is most delightful to trace; and it is an influence which is felt in every place, at every moment, while the ravages of political ambition, desolating as they may be in their tempestuous violence, pass away, and give place to a prosperity like that which they seemed wholly to overwhelm,—a prosperity which, as the result of innumerable labours, and, therefore, of innumerable wishes that have prompted these labours, rises again, and continues through a long period of years, by the gentler influence of those very principles to which before it owed its destruction."*

These remarks may assist us in forming an estimate of the moral aspect of this desire. Power may be an instrument of great good, and has therefore been rendered directly delightful to the mind. It follows from hence, that the desire of power is not in itself *positively* wrong. I say positively, because it may be *negatively* wrong, when it is not so *per se*. The desire of food is an original feeling, and, consequently, like all our native feelings, possesses in itself no more moral character than the instinctive attachments of brutes. No moral approbation can accordingly be awarded to the act of taking food, unless the object of the person who partakes of it be to strengthen him for the labours and duties to which he is called. Yet even when this intention does not exist, the disapprobation of the act, which must arise in minds of exalted virtue, is excited not by what *is*, but by what *is not*. The moral error is one of *defect*. It is so also with reference to the desire of power. Power should be desired for the sake of that good which it may be rendered the instrument of securing. There can be no virtuous desire of power when this higher object is

* Vol. III. pp. 463-4.

disregarded, and the feeling becomes positively sinful in cases where power is sought with a view to the attainment of an end which it is not lawful to pursue.

The desire of wealth is usually regarded as a particular modification of the love of power. Wealth gives us power to secure the voluntary services of others, and to obtain all that those services can procure for us. The ultimate object of desire, in this case, has accordingly been stated to be the power which wealth thus confers upon us. It is probably more accurate, however, to say that the gratifications which this power enables us to secure, constitute the ultimate object of the desire, rather than the power itself. The love of wealth is manifestly not an original principle. Wealth is not desired, like knowledge, for its own sake; "for a mass of gold does not possess more essential value, or much more essential value, than a mass of iron. It derives its value from the command over the labour of others, or the actual possessions of others, which it is capable of transferring to every one into whose hands it may pass;" or from the distinction which the possession of what is rare, and universally desired, confers.

In the case of the miser, however, the ultimate object of desire is thought to be the wealth itself. He does not employ it as an instrument in securing those enjoyments in relation to which alone wealth has any value. "The mere gold is desired, as if *it* were a source of every happiness; when every happiness which it truly affords, is despised, as if of little value, compared with that which derives from its power over the very enjoyments that are despised, all the absolute value that it possesses."

"The common theory of the value attached by the miser to the mere symbol of enjoyment is, that the

symbol, by the influence of the general laws of association, becomes representative of the enjoyment itself. We have so frequently considered money as that which affords us various pleasures, that the value which we attach to the pleasures themselves, is transferred to that which we know will always produce them, when exchanged for the enjoyment."

Now it cannot be denied, I imagine, that this theory is open to the objection of Dr. Brown, *viz.* that while it sufficiently shews how *all men* come to attach value to money, it does not explain the fact that *some* men are led to attach *peculiar* value to it. It would seem to prove, indeed, that all men must ultimately become misers. Dissatisfied, on this account, with the common theory, Dr. B. founds the passion of the miser, not on the pleasing association of enjoyment, but on an associated painful feeling of regret. Many of the enjoyments which money purchases, perish with the moment of their acquisition; while the money that procured them is still in being. The cake of the school-boy is soon devoured; its value has wholly ceased; but the money which he gave for it is still in existence, and would have remained his own if the cake had not been purchased. He thinks of the penny as existing now—and existing without any thing which he can oppose as an equivalent to it; and the feeling of regret that he has parted with it arises. This feeling of regret will be suggested by every conception of expense,—will be heightened by the recollection of all that the money might have purchased, but which is now beyond his reach, as well as by other considerations,—till avarice, at length, takes full possession of his heart.

Did the statements of Dr. Brown proceed no further, they would manifestly be exposed to the same difficulty

with the common theory. But he goes on to shew that the different manner in which money is spent, in early life, may lay a foundation for the different emotions with which it is ultimately contemplated. When, in return for the money expended, nothing substantial or permanent has been gained, this feeling of regret, the germ of avarice, is likely to arise. On the other hand, when something has been purchased which retains a permanent value, the feeling is less likely to arise; and the pleasure derived from the purchase, during its permanent possession, will accustom the purchaser to value money only as the instrument of what he feels to be valuable. I have, I acknowledge, some doubts whether a reference to fact will altogether bear out the statements of Dr. Brown; but I cannot withhold my admiration from the singular beauty and ingenuity of many of his subsequent remarks upon the subject.

### DESIRE OF THE ESTEEM AND LOVE OF OTHERS.

Under this head I include the love of fame, for it grows out of the desire of esteem, and is not essentially distinct from it. That the emotion itself constitutes one of the original susceptibilities of the mind—or that the Creator of the mind has rendered the esteem and love of others naturally grateful to us, it were a waste of time to stop to prove. Nor is it more necessary to specify the various ways in which the emotion is developed. My remarks shall, therefore, be confined to the moral aspect of this desire. Constituting then, as it does, a part of our moral nature, it is impossible that it can be evil *per se*. Dr. Brown thinks that, unless in cases when it becomes improper from excess, it must, on this account, be virtuous *per se*; so that when a man desires and seeks the esteem

and approbation of others, for its own sake, he feels and acts virtuously. If this were conceded, however, it would follow that true virtue may be predicated of an individual when he experiences hunger, or desires to enjoy the flavour of a peach.

The moral character of this emotion must, then, be determined, by the ultimate object, on account of which we desire the esteem and love of others. If we seek it as an important instrument of good, it is both lawful and commendable. But if, on the contrary, we pursue it to gratify our pride—as the means of doing evil;—or even if we desire it for its own sake merely, the moralist who takes the high tone and ground of divine revelation, must pronounce it morally wrong. "Take heed," said our Saviour, "that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven."

It has been well observed, that when the desire of the esteem and love of others is pursued as an ultimate object, it disinclines the heart from following the course to which higher motives to virtue would lead. The individual under its control may have no objection to the authority of heaven, as a rule of action, when it happens to correspond in any point with his inclinations; but, when it departs from this point of accidental union, the authority is overlooked and disregarded.

Yet, though I dare not pronounce the desire of the esteem or approbation of others, for its own sake, to be positively virtuous, I freely acknowledge that it is the means of preventing much evil. "The mere love of reputation," says one, "when the standard of morality is somewhat elevated, will produce much of that regularity of conduct, which is conducive to

the order and happiness of society."—"A man that is not quite abandoned, must behave so in society as to preserve some degree of reputation. This every man desires to do, and the greater part actually do. In order to this, he must acquire the habit of restraining his appetites, and passions, within the bounds which common decency requires, and so as to make himself a tolerable member of society, if not an useful and agreeable one. It cannot be doubted that many, from a regard to character, and the opinion of others, are led to make themselves useful and agreeable members of society, over whom a sense of duty exerts but a small influence."* In the same strain, though not quite so evangelically, writes an eloquent French author, "the greater number of men, weak by the frailties and inconsistencies of their nature, require a support. The desire of reputation, coming in aid of their too weak sense of duty, binds them to that virtue, which otherwise they might quit. They would dare, perhaps, to blush to themselves; they would fear to blush before their nation, and their age."

## THE DESIRE OF SUPERIORITY, OR THE PRINCIPLE OF EMULATION.

Some philosophers regard the desire of superiority, as not distinct from the desire of power. "We cannot," they say, "have the superiority over others with whom we compare ourselves, without possessing some degree of power over them. Superiority is not any thing else but power, and the pleasure which arises from the consciousness of being superior to others, is the same, in kind and degree, with that which arises from our conscious possession of power."

* Dewar's Moral Philosophy, Vol. I. p. 415.

I am disposed to question the accuracy of the preceding statement. That superiority frequently confers power, and is, indeed, generally perhaps connected with it, is conceded; but it does not appear to me that the two things are identical. One man may be superior in humility to another, but what power over him does this superiority confer? Or rather, how does it appear that this superiority is power? The love of distinction, as *distinction*, appears to me a distinct susceptibility of mind from the love of power. A man may desire distinction without thinking of the power with which it is usually connected.

It is of great importance not to confound the desire of superiority, or emulation, with envy. Emulation aims merely to surpass others; envy to deprive them of certain advantages that we may attain this superiority. Emulation may exist amongst those who are united in the most cordial friendship. Envy cannot; because envy involves in it a malevolent affection. It is the wishing of evil to others; though evil to them is only desired as the means of attaining superiority over them. "Emulation," says Dr. Butler, "is merely the desire of superiority over others with whom we compare ourselves. To desire the attainment of this superiority, by the particular means of others being brought down below our own level, is the particular notion of envy. From whence it is easy to see, that the real end which the natural passion emulation, and which the unlawful one envy, aims at, is exactly the same; and, consequently, that to do mischief is not the end of envy, but merely the means it makes use of to attain its end."

The following distinction between jealousy and envy is worth attention. "The malevolent affection with which some unfortunate minds are ever disposed to view those whom they consider as competitors, is

denominated jealousy, when the competitor, or supposed competitor, is one who has not yet attained their height, and when it is the future that is dreaded. It is denominated envy, when it regards some actual attainment of another. But the emotion, varying with this mere difference of the present and the future, is the same in every other respect. In both cases the wish is a wish of evil—a wish of evil to the excellent—and a wish which, by a sort of anticipated retribution, is itself evil to the heart that has conceived it."*

The principle of emulation is not, then, contaminated by any desire of evil to others. It is not, accordingly, evil *per se*. It cannot be so, because it is one of the original susceptibilities of the mind. Neither is it good *per se*. It is impossible to grant that one original propensity, developed by its appropriate object, is, on that account, virtuous, without making a similar concession in favour of all,—a concession which would lead into interminable difficulties. Nor does the moral aspect of this emotion depend altogether upon the nature of that in which we desire to excel. The desire of superiority, in relation even to Christian attainments, merely as *superiority*, could such a desire possibly exist, would not be a virtuous desire. To invest it with the character of virtue, the emotion must be excited by the moral excellence, or holiness itself. This desire is a very important part of our mental constitution. As a natural feeling merely, it has nothing in it of the nature of true virtue; but, under the influence and direction of higher principles, it may be rendered the instrument of much good.

* Brown, Vol. III. p. 549.

It has become a question, how far it is right to take the advantage of an appeal to this part of our mental constitution in conducting the education of children. On the one hand, it is said, that little good can be effected without such an appeal; it is alleged, on the other, that by making that appeal, we attempt to influence the child by a motive which does not possess the nature of true virtue, and are in danger of stimulating to a very alarming degree, a principle which needs to be kept in subjection. It is of importance, I apprehend, to remember, in this controversy, that, in the business of education, we have, in most cases, only mere natural principles to which we can appeal—that if it be wrong, for the reasons specified above, to avail ourselves of the principle of emulation, it is difficult to see how it can be right to avail ourselves of the principles of fear, shame, &c. If a child does what is right, merely through fear of disgrace, or punishment, or because the tutor, or the parent, commands it, I freely acknowledge that, on the principles of the New Testament, there is nothing of true virtue in his conduct; but are we not, on this account, to threaten, or command? The proper method seems to be, to avail ourselves of every natural propensity which can afford aid in the mental and moral discipline of the young—to bring the powerful motives supplied by the principles of shame, fear, emulation, to bear upon them; but to teach them, at the same time, that they must be influenced by higher motives, in order to obtain the approbation of God.

THE

# ELEMENTS OF MORAL SCIENCE.

THE main object of the preceding part of this volume has been to ascertain and exhibit the nature, or, what we may call, the physical properties of the mind—to describe its original susceptibilities and powers—the varied states of thought and feeling which it has been formed by its Creator capable of experiencing—the elements of the more complex phænomena—the circumstances and occasions on which they arise, or the laws which regulate their occurrence and succession.

Mental Philosophy then, properly so called, constitutes one branch of Physical Science. The mind is a substance, not, indeed, visible and tangible like gold, but still a substance; *i.e.* something subsisting, or something to which existence has been imparted by the power of the great source of being. And it is the business of the intellectual philosopher, to inquire into the properties of the substance *mind*, as the student in natural science inquires into the properties of the substance *matter*. To this point our efforts have hitherto been exclusively, or all but exclusively, directed.

There is, however, another very important inquiry to be instituted. Having ascertained the original susceptibilities of the mind, there still remains the question which regards the rectitude of the actual feelings, which, in individual cases, grow out of these original susceptibilities. For though few things can be more certain, than that no feeling which the mind has been formed to experience, can be evil *per se*, it is not a legitimate consequence of this statement that, in every case of its occurrence, it must be a right feeling. The mind has been rendered susceptible, for instance, of the feeling of anger. Anger cannot, therefore, be evil *per se;* yet as it may become so through misdirection, excess, &c., we cannot pronounce upon its blameless character, in any particular instance, without examination. Even philosophers, who do not perhaps admit the moral pravity of human nature, are aware of this distinction between what *is*, and what *ought* to be. Thus accurately speaks Dr. Brown: "Though our intellectual analysis were perfect, so that we could distinguish, in our most complex thought or emotion, its constituent elements, and trace with exactness the series of simpler thoughts which have progressively given rise to them, other inquiries, equally, or still more important, would remain. We do not know all that is to be known of the mind, when we know all its phænomena, as we know all that can be known of matter, when we know the appearances which it presents, in every situation in which it is possible to place it, and the manner in which it then acts, or is acted upon by other bodies. When we know that man has certain affections and passions, there still remains the great inquiry as to the propriety or impropriety of those passions, and of the conduct to which they lead. We have to consider not merely *how* he is capable of

acting, but, also, whether acting in the manner supposed, he would be fulfilling a duty or perpetrating a crime."*

The Rev. J. Gilbert, in his Memoirs of the late Dr. Williams, of Rotherham, repeats with apparent acquiescence a charge of overlooking this distinction, which had been preferred by the latter gentleman against the Northern metaphysicians. "He regarded," says Mr. G. "the science of morals as in a very imperfect degree understood, for which in the commencement of the work he assigns a variety of causes. He thought in particular," proceeds Mr. G. "that the method of induction alone, as proposed by the Scotch professors of the philosophy of mind, could never produce a result, capable of supplying adequate grounds for the formation of a satisfactory system of morals."† In support of this general statement, Mr. G. himself says, "By induction from particular observation of what transpires in our own minds, we may indeed ascertain that we are accountable—but we cannot arrive at a true knowledge of the nature of virtue and vice, or of their respective sources. The very supposition that such a method of constructing a true moral philosophy can possibly succeed, must assume that the inquirer is, in fact, a perfect being—that what ought to be, and what is, are in him the same thing. How else, by any examination of his thoughts, feelings, volitions, and actions, can he ascertain the rule of requirement, the general law of rectitude?"‡

The correctness of the latter statement is admitted. It is, in truth, the very statement of Dr. Brown; and Mr. Gilbert, in justice to this distinguished writer, ought to have adverted to this fact. I admit, indeed,

* Vol. I. p. 9. † P. 588. ‡ P. 589.

that Dr. Brown sometimes writes, on the subject of morals, as though he had practically forgotten his own statements; but no evidence can be more conclusive than that which is afforded by the passage I have quoted, that, when the subject was before the view of his mind, he saw with perfect clearness the important distinction which exists between what is, and what ought to be, in human feeling and conduct.

And no person, it is conceived, who admits the statements of Scripture, in reference to the moral pravity of human nature, can forget this distinction. For though the fall of man effected no change in the original susceptibilities of the mind—though it created none, and extinguished none, it perverted all. It brought a cloud over the understanding which affects our moral perceptions; so that, till it is dispelled by supernatural influence, the susceptibility of love is frequently developed by that which is evil, and the susceptibility of hatred by that which is good.

It becomes, accordingly, necessary to devote a little time to the investigation of what ought to be in man;—having shewn how he is *capable* of acting, to consider, as Dr. Brown says, "whether acting in the manner supposed, he would be fulfilling a duty, or perpetrating a crime."

To conduct this investigation, so as to lead to a satisfactory result, it is obviously necessary to ascertain what is the proper standard of rectitude, in reference to human affections and conduct. The term Rectitude necessarily supposes a balance in which moral actions may be weighed, or a rule by which they are to be measured. What is this rule? This question, which is comprehensive of almost every inquiry

that can be presented on the subject of morals, is generally conceived to resolve itself into two, *viz.* What is rectitude? and, What is the measure, or standard, of rectitude? Or, according to another mode of statement, adopted by some, What is the nature—and what the criterion of virtue? It is, in the opinion of many writers, of great importance to preserve this distinction. "In this controversy," says one, "we often meet with much needless discussion, owing, in a great measure, to different senses attached to terms of a similar import. Thus the word Test, or Criterion, is sometimes applied to that which *constitutes* virtue, instead of being confined to that by which it is *ascertained*. In the same way, the term Standard of virtue has been confounded with the foundation of virtue." In strict accuracy, however, the question proposed above is one only; for that which renders an action right, is the ultimate, *i. e.* the true criterion, of its being so. If an action be morally right, for instance, because it is conformed to the law of God, the divine law must, of course, be the standard of moral rectitude. It is, however, perfectly conceivable that, of this ultimate standard, whatever it may be, we may not, in all cases, be able to avail ourselves. We may find ourselves compelled to employ a measure nearer at hand, so to speak, a measure which may *prove* an action to be right, though it does not *render* it so. It will, probably, therefore, be expedient to proceed in our inquiries, as if the question, to which reference has been made, really involved the two perfectly separate and distinct inquiries, *viz.* What is rectitude?—and, What is the standard of rectitude? Our first question then is,

## WHAT IS RECTITUDE?

The general doctrine, in relation to this important topic, which I shall endeavour to establish, is the following; *viz.* that the term Rectitude denotes some actual quality in actions—or that there is an essential distinction between right and wrong. In what rectitude actually consists, I shall afterwards state; my object, at present, is to support this general doctrine;—an object which will, perhaps, be best attained by instituting an examination of various statements which are directly opposed to it, and by exhibiting it in the light of contrast with them as we proceed. The general assertion of an essential difference between right and wrong is, then, I observe,

I. At variance with the statements of those sceptical philosophers who maintain that the term Rectitude merely denotes that conduct which happens to be sanctioned by the customs, or laws, of the country, or the age, in which we live. This sceptical doctrine is founded on the different moral estimate which is formed of the same action, in various countries and ages. In Sparta, theft was permitted by law, and, when undiscovered, viewed with approbation; in England, it is execrated, and punished. In some countries, the aged have been abandoned, without compunction, to their fate; in Great Britain, they are honoured, and cherished.

Upon a few isolated facts of this description, the pernicious doctrine has been built, that actions have no moral character—that we have only "a few casual prejudices, which we have chosen to call virtue;—prejudices which a slight difference of opinion might have reversed, making the lover of mankind odious

to us, and giving all our regard to the robber and the murderer."

To overthrow this pernicious doctrine, nothing more is necessary than to refer to the general agreement, in the moral judgments of men, which, after every allowance has been made for the difference of opinion referred to above, will be found to exist. With some trifling diversity—a diversity for which it is by no means difficult to account—there is a great, and general, and remarkable uniformity. For one, who views theft, and infanticide, and parricide, without detestation, we can point to thousands, and tens of thousands, who cannot revert to them even in thought without the warmest feelings of moral abhorrence. And this fact, as we have said, completely overturns the sceptical doctrine. Because—for such must be the language of the objector if he adhere to truth and fact—in one case out of five hundred, or five thousand, there exists a *difference* of judgment, in reference to moral actions, actions have *no* moral character. It is surely sufficient to reply, Because, in the remaining five hundred, or five thousand, there is an *agreement*, actions *have* a moral character. If his argument has any weight, ours must have weight; for they rest on the same basis, *viz.* that the moral judgments of men may be regarded as evidence of the moral character of actions. And the argument, if it be allowed at all, throws much greater weight into our scale, than into his. The general rule is with us, the exceptions with him. The moral judgments of *men*—of the race at large—are on our side of the question; the moral judgments of a *few only* on his. The probability certainly is, that the correct judgment is with the *many;* the mistaken one, with the few. Were an individual to call an object black, which

all other men considered scarlet, we should instantly decide not surely that its colour was not scarlet, but that the eyes of the observer were the subjects of disease. The application of the illustration is easy. Individual approbation of theft, infanticide, parricide, &c., does not disprove them to be crimes of a crimson hue; it shews merely that the judgment—the moral eye of the observer—is diseased. "Our taste," says Dr. Brown, "distinguishes what is sweet and what is bitter—we prefer one to the other. Who is there who denies that there is, in the original capability of the infant, a tendency to certain preferences of this kind? Yet in the luxury of other years, there are culinary preparations which the taste of some approves, while the taste of others rejects them. If the morals of different nations, differed half as much as the cookery of different nations, we might allow some cause for disbelief of all the natural distinctions of right and wrong. But what sceptic is there who contends, from the approbation which one nation gives to a sauce, or a ragout, which almost sickens him, that the sweet does not naturally differ from the bitter, as more agreeable, the aromatic from the insipid, and that to the infant sugar, wormwood, spice, are, as sources of pleasure, essentially the same?"*

The theory of Hobbes is a modification of the sceptical philosophy, on which we have been animadverting. That philosophy, as we have seen, not only regards actions as devoid originally of any moral character, but as permanently remaining so—the moral estimates we form of actions being mere prejudices—so that, in fact, there is no such thing as virtue and vice in the world. Hobbes, however, though he

* Vol. III. p. 605.

contends for the original moral indifference of actions, admits that legal enactment may give, and, indeed, does give them, a moral character. That which is commanded, becomes virtue through the influence of law, though it was not so before; and disobedience is, accordingly, not to be regarded as imprudence, or disobedience merely, but as actual immorality. It is impossible to conceive of a more complete and triumphant answer to this dogma, than that which has been given by Drs. Brown and Cudworth. "A law, if there be no moral obligation independent of the law, and prior to it, is only the expression of the desire of a multitude who have power to punish, that is to say, to inflict evil of some kind on those who resist them,—it may be imprudent, therefore, to resist them; that is to say, imprudent to run the risk of that precise quantity of physical suffering which is threatened; but it can be nothing more. If there be no essential morality that is independent of law, an action does not acquire any new qualities by being the desire of a thousand persons rather than of one. There may be more danger, indeed, in disobeying a thousand than in disobeying one, but not more guilt. To use Dr. Cudworth's argument, it must either be right to obey the law, and wrong to disobey it, or indifferent whether we obey it or not. If it be morally indifferent whether we obey it or not, the law, which may or may not be obeyed, with equal virtue, cannot be a source of virtue; and if it be right to obey it, the very supposition that it is right to obey it, implies a notion of right and wrong, that is antecedent to the law, and gives it its moral efficacy.

"A sovereign," it has been truly said, "may enact and rescind laws; but he cannot create or rescind a single virtue." It is impossible for him "to reverse

the feelings of moral approbation and disapprobation with which we contemplate the conduct of men." Our moral judgments are not, then, the result of political enactment. They flow from another source. They are, as we have seen, remarkably uniform;—a fact which is easily accounted for on the supposition that there is an essential difference between right and wrong, which we are formed as capable of perceiving, as the difference which exists between truth and falsehood; but which must be wholly inexplicable on any other system.

II. The assertion of an essential difference between right and wrong, is at variance with the sentiments of those who maintain that rectitude is founded solely in the will or command of God. The two words, will and command, are used as synonymous here, because the commands of God are the expression of his will. It is not denied indeed,—and this should be most carefully observed—that the will of God, when ascertained, must be, in all cases, a most perfect measure of virtue; nor that it may, in some cases, if not in all, be the most convenient measure. I wish, also, further to guard the reader against supposing that any thing which may be said on this point is intended to oppose the sentiment (whether it be a correct one or not, I do not now stop to inquire) that the nature of God is the foundation of virtue. All that is meant is, that we must look to something more ultimate, so to speak, not, indeed, as the standard, but as the foundation of virtue.

One would think that any dispute upon this subject might be very easily settled. The question is simply this, "Is an action right because God commanded it? Or did God command it because it is right?" It is to me, I acknowledge, most wonderful that any

doubt should have existed whether the latter part of this dilemma exhibits the true state of the case; for if an action be right because God commanded it, it follows,

*First,* that it has no rectitude in itself. Its rectitude, by supposition, is communicated by the will or command of God; and as no being who has life in himself can have life communicated, so no action which has rectitude in itself, can have rectitude communicated. And if rectitude be thus communicated to actions, *i. e.* if they are virtuous, and vicious, *only* because God willed that they should be so,—then vice is in itself just as excellent as virtue, and virtue just as worthless as vice. "Let me ask," says Dr. Dwight, "can any man believe this to be true?"

*Secondly,* that God willed virtue to be excellent without any reason. The rectitude or virtue is *consequent* upon the divine will. It did not precede it; it did not accompany it; and could not, therefore, have been the cause of the volition. "And if virtue, and vice, had originally, and as they are seen by the eye of God, no moral difference in their nature; then there was plainly no reason why God should prefer, or why he actually preferred, one of them to the other. There was, for example, no reason why he chose, and required, that intelligent creatures should love him, and each other, rather than that they should hate him, and hate each other. In choosing and requiring that they should exercise this love, God acted, therefore, without any motive whatever. "Certainly," says Dwight, "no sober man will attribute this conduct to God."*

*Thirdly,* if rectitude is founded on the will of God,

* System of Theology, Sermon 99.

it follows, that he might have commanded what he now prohibits, and have prohibited what he now commands. If he willed virtue to be excellent, without any reason, and actually rendered it virtue by so willing it, (which is the case by supposition,) then he might have willed vice to be excellent, and it would have become virtue by the volition. To borrow the strong language of Dr. Dwight—"If he had willed the character which Satan adopted, and sustains, to be moral excellence, and that which Gabriel sustains to be moral worthlessness, these two beings, continuing in every other respect the same, would have interchanged their characters; Satan would have become entirely lovely, and Gabriel entirely detestable. Must not he who can believe this doctrine, as easily believe that, if God had willed it, two and two would have become five? Is it at all easier to believe that truth and falsehood can interchange their natures, than that a square and a triangle can interchange theirs?"

*Fourthly,* if rectitude has its foundation in the will of God, the distinction which is always conceived to exist between moral duties and positive enactments, must be abandoned. Were it conceded, as the sentiment we oppose asserts, that an action is right because God commands it, and wrong because He forbids it, it would follow that the prohibition of "the tree of knowledge of good and evil," and the prohibition of murder and idolatry, gave the same character to the conduct forbidden. Previous to the command, there was no more sin in the one case than in the other; and after the command, there must have been an equal measure of sin in both. A positive precept, and a moral duty, are words without meaning, unless it be conceded that the latter denotes an action which was commanded because it was right,

and the former an action which became right by being commanded.

III. The assertion of an essential difference between right and wrong, is opposed to those statements which represent rectitude as depending upon the arbitrary constitution of the human mind. There are three forms of this latter opinion which it will be necessary to notice; *viz.* the theories of Hutcheson, Adam Smith, and Dr. Brown. From the latter of these philosophers it pains me greatly to be obliged to differ so materially; but I am constrained to think, that, on the subject of morals, he is less to be trusted as a guide, than on any other part of his course. I trust I shall be able to shew, that his own rules of philosophizing overturn his own system of morals. At all events the reader shall have an opportunity of judging between us. A victory over Dr. Brown, *for the sake of the triumph,* is one of the very last things I should desire. I greatly honour his talents—his character—his memory; but truth is dearer to me than any system, or any man.

The theories to which I have referred have some features in common, and some common objections may be urged against them; yet the defects and mistakes of each, as they appear to me at least, are so far special, as to render it desirable to consider them separately.

To account for the origin of our ideas of right and wrong, Dr. Hutcheson supposes that God has endowed us with what he calls "a moral sense," meaning, by this phrase, a power within us different from reason, which renders certain actions pleasing, and certain others displeasing to us. Through the medium of the external senses, certain flavours and odours, &c. become the sources of pleasure to us: by means of

the moral sense, in like manner, certain affections and actions of moral agents, excite moral approbation and disapprobation, leading to the formation of moral judgments.

If Dr. Hutcheson had been contented with saying, as Dr. Brown has done, that certain actions awaken, when contemplated, vivid emotions of approval or disgust, his scheme would have been intelligible at any rate, but it would not have answered the end he had in view. He wished to account for the origin of our *notions* of right and wrong, which he would not have conceived himself to have done, by merely shewing how *approbation* and *disapprobation* arise. It was necessary to call in the aid of a moral sense; and then, as the philosophy of the times taught that, by means of the external senses, we gain *perceptions*, or *ideas*, as they were called, as well as *sensations*, it seemed to follow that, by the medium of the moral sense, we may gain, so to speak, moral sensations and moral *perceptions*—or ideas of right and wrong.

Upon this scheme an excellent writer thus remarks: "Our ideas of morality, if this account is just, have the same origin with our ideas of the sensible qualities of bodies, the harmony of sound, or the beauties of painting and sculpture; that is, the mere good pleasure of our Maker, adapting the mind and its organs in a particular manner to certain objects. Virtue is an affair of taste. Moral right and wrong signify nothing in the objects themselves to which they are applied, any more than agreeable and harsh, sweet and bitter, pleasant and painful, but only certain effects in us. Our perceptions of right, or moral good in actions, is that agreeable emotion, or feeling, which certain actions produce in us; and of wrong, or moral evil, the contrary. They are particular modifications

of our minds, or impressions which they are ready to receive from the contemplation of certain actions, which the contrary actions might have occasioned, had the Author of nature so pleased; and which to suppose to belong to these actions themselves, is as absurd as to ascribe the pleasure or uneasiness which the observation of a particular form gives us, to the form itself. It is, therefore, by this account, improper to say of an action that it is right, in much the same sense that it is improper to say of an object of taste, that it is sweet; or of pain, that it is in the fire."*

I agree with Mr. Stewart, in thinking, that all these consequences—sceptical conclusions as he calls them—do not legitimately follow from this statement of Hutcheson. No part of that statement justifies the charge of Dr. Price, that, on this theory, moral right and wrong signify nothing in the objects themselves, to which they are applied. The analogy from sensual affections to which Dr. Price appeals, supports his charge only by resorting to what Mr. Stewart justly denominates a miserable quibble—for though there is nothing in sugar that resembles the sensation of sweetness, there is something in it by which that sensation is produced. In like manner, though we cannot conceive that any thing resembling the emotion of approbation, resides in the action which awakens it, there must be a certain quality, or aptitude in the action, to excite the emotion; and this quality, or aptitude, whatever it be, and whatever we call it, may be, on Hutcheson's principles, the virtue of the action.

It cannot be denied, however, that a part at least of Dr. Price's charge is true. Hutcheson's statements do certainly represent virtue as depending upon the

* *Vide* Price on Morals, pp. 10, 11.

arbitrary constitution of the mind. Had our external senses been different, our sensations must have been diverse from what they are at present. Would, then, our moral feelings and judgments remain the same, were our *moral sense* to undergo a change? How can it be pretended? By the present constitution of the mind, virtuous actions are doubtless agreeable to us. By a different constitution, which, for ought we know to the contrary, we might easily have received, vicious actions (*i. e.* as they are *now* regarded by us) might have been rendered agreeable. The character of Satan might have awakened emotions of approbation; the character of God those of disapprobation;—and, consequently, on his principles, our ideas of right and wrong must have been completely reversed.

This objection against the doctrine of Hutcheson appears to me a radical and fatal one. I most perfectly agree with Mr. Stewart in the following sentiment, "that it is of the utmost importance to remember that the words right and wrong express qualities of actions." "When I say," adds this writer, "of an act of justice that it is right, do I mean merely that the act excites pleasure in my mind, as a particular colour pleases my eye, in consequence of a relation which it bears to my organ; or do I mean to assert a truth, which is as independent of my constitution as the equality of the three angles of a triangle to two right angles?"*

The theory of Dr. Adam Smith is considerably different from that of Hutcheson. If, on contemplating the actions of our fellow men, we are able fully to sympathize with them, we regard the action as right, and the agent as virtuous. If, on the other

* Outlines, p. 240.

hand, we find the exercise of sympathy impossible, our moral judgment is the direct reverse. When we regard our own conduct, " we in some measure reverse this process; or rather, by a process still more refined, we imagine others sympathizing with us, and sympathize in their sympathy. We consider how our conduct would appear to an impartial spectator. We approve of it, if it be that of which we feel that he would approve; we disapprove of it, if it be that which we feel, by the experience of our own former emotions, when we have ourselves in similar circumstances estimated the actions of others, would excite his disapprobation."

Dr. Brown examines this fantastical doctrine with great minuteness, thus giving to it more importance than it deserves. He states that sympathy is not a perpetual accompaniment of every action of every one around us—that it is only called forth when there is in those actions which excite it, a display of vividness of feeling; so that, on the theory of Smith, the greater part of human actions can have no moral character, since they awaken no sympathy. He states further, that, without some previous moral notions of actions as right, or wrong, mere sympathy could communicate no ideas of virtue and vice. The utmost effect of sympathy is to identify us, so to speak, with the individual who excites it. Now it is supposed that this individual cannot gain, by contemplating his own circumstances and conduct, any notion of rectitude. How then, it is natural to ask, can we gain it, by identifying ourselves with him?

There is, however, I imagine, a more important objection against the theory of Smith, than any to which Dr. Brown has adverted. It obviously founds rectitude on the arbitrary constitution of the mind.

The mind is so constituted that it sympathizes with certain actions; those actions, says Dr. Smith, are right. Does he mean that the sympathy *renders* them virtuous — or *proves* them to be so? If he mean the latter merely, then the system does not exhibit the *foundation* of virtue at all. If the former, then virtue depends upon the constitution of the mind; and, as it is possible for the mind to have been constituted differently, it might have been virtuous to lie and kill, and vicious to refrain from either!

The foregoing objection against this whimsical theory would have been valid, if man were now what he ought to be. But he is not. The crown of moral purity has fallen from his head. His judgment is beclouded—his heart is depraved; and, in consequence of this circumstance, he may experience sympathy, where he should feel none — and lack it, where it ought to be possessed. So far, then, is the theory of Dr. Smith from exhibiting the *foundation* of virtue, that it does not furnish us with an accurate *criterion* of virtue.

The theory of Dr. Brown differs very considerably both from that of Smith and Hutcheson; the precise nature, however, of that difference will be better appreciated, after a statement of that theory has been laid before the reader. In consequence of its importance, and the remarks which I intend to make upon it, I shall give a fuller account of it than of the statements of preceding writers.

Dr. Brown, then, begins his discussion by denying the propriety of the distinction which is usually made between a moral action, and a moral agent—a distinction which has led to the common opinion, that an action may be evil, while the agent is virtuous,

or, *vice versâ*, that the action may be praiseworthy, while the agent deserves censure and condemnation. To say that any action which we are considering, is right or wrong, and to say that the person who performed it has merit or demerit, are to say precisely the same thing. "An action," he adds, "if it be any thing more than a mere insignificant word, is a certain agent in certain circumstances, willing and producing a certain effect; and the emotion, whatever it may be, excited by the action, is in truth, and must always be, the emotion excited by the agent, real or supposed."

He proceeds to state that certain actions, or rather certain agents, in certain circumstances, excite instantly and irresistibly, by virtue of the constitution of the mind, the emotions of moral approbation—that all actions which are thus united in awakening this emotion, we class together, and give to them a generic name—that this generic name is virtue, which does not denote any thing self-existing, like the universal essences of the schools, and eternal, like the Platonic ideas—that it denotes nothing in itself, but is only a general name for certain actions, which agree in exciting, when contemplated, this emotion of approbation—that this emotion, and the contrary, are distinctive to us of the agent as virtuous or vicious, worthy or unworthy of esteem—that the emotions do not arise from processes of reasonings and regard to general rules of propriety, formed generally by attention to the circumstances in which the mind is placed—that though the general rules of propriety may seem to confirm our suffrage, the suffrage itself is given before their sanction—that these rules of propriety are ultimately founded on these particular emotions; it being the case, not that we originally approve or condemn particular actions, because, upon examination, they

appear to be agreeable to, or inconsistent with, a certain general rule; but that the general rule is formed, on the contrary, by finding, from experience, that all actions of a certain kind, or circumstanced in a certain manner, are approved or disapproved—that the tendency of an action, in consequence of the constitution of the mind to awaken this emotion, and which he calls its approveableness, is the virtue of the action, and that this approveableness is nothing but the relation of the action to the emotion—that the obligation to perform an action is, that if we neglect it we cannot look upon ourselves with approving regard, and that a man has acted virtuously, and has merit, who has acted in such a manner as to secure his regard. "Why," says he, "does it seem to us virtue to act in this way? Because," he replies, "the very contemplation of the action excites in us a certain feeling of vivid approbation. It is this irresistible approveableness (if I may use such a word to express briefly the relation of certain actions to the emotion that is instantly excited by them) which constitutes to us, who consider the action, the virtue of the action itself, the merit of him who performed it, the moral obligation on him to have performed it."

From this abstract it appears, that the theory of Dr. Brown differs very materially from that of Dr. Smith. According to the former, certain actions directly awaken emotions of approbation, or disapprobation; and the actions are regarded as virtuous or vicious, in consequence of the relation they bear to these emotions. According to Dr. Smith, we do not immediately approve of certain actions, or disapprove of certain other actions. Before any moral sentiment arises, we must go through another process—that by which we enter into the feelings of others; if we are able

perfectly to sympathize with them, we regard their conduct as virtuous.

From the theory of Hutcheson, that of Dr. Brown does not differ so widely. The latter, indeed, chiefly objects to those statements of Hutcheson in which he ascribes all our moral feelings, and judgments, to a "moral sense;" for, "unless words," says he, "be used with little or no meaning, such statements imply that we have some primary medium of moral perception which conveys to us moral knowledge, as the eye enables us to distinguish directly the varieties of colour, or the ear the varieties of sound; whereas there is nothing in our moral judgments allied to sensation or perception in the philosophic meaning of these terms. "If, indeed," he adds, "sense were understood in this case to be synonymous with mere susceptibility, so that when we speak of a moral sense, we were to be understood to mean only a suceptibility of moral feeling of some sort, we might be allowed to have a sense of morals; because we have, unquestionably, a susceptibility of moral emotion; but, in this wide extension of the term, we might be said, in like manner, to have as many senses as we have feelings of any sort, since, in whatever manner the mind may have been affected, it must have had a previous susceptibility of being so affected, as much as in the peculiar affections that are denominated moral."*

It is probable that Hutcheson employed the phrase moral sense, as *some* of our modern phrenologists have adopted the term organ, without taking the trouble to inquire whether he attached any definite signification to it. It doubtless ought to be discarded, since it must either be used in so lax and vague a

* Vol. IV. p. 164.

manner as to convey no meaning, or in a definite sense, when it would convey an improper meaning.

Dr. Brown's system is not certainly exposed to this objection; yet the radical fault which attaches itself to the theories of Hutcheson and Smith, cleaves to that of Brown; while it has vices peculiar to itself. Like them, it lays the foundation of virtue, in the arbitrary constitution of the mind. In consequence of the possession of that constitution, certain actions awaken the emotions of approbation, as certain flavours, and odours, are naturally agreeable. Now, as no one doubts that what is at present pleasant to the taste, &c., might have been rendered disagreeable; — it seems to follow, as a necessary consequence, that those actions which now excite approbation, might, with a different mental constitution, have awakened disapprobation; *i. e.* that virtue and vice do not essentially differ from each other. This, indeed, seems to be admitted by Dr. Brown himself; for, even while affirming the immutability of moral distinctions, he resolves that immutability into the constitution, and unchangeableness of the mind. "Virtue," says he, "being a term expressive only of the relation of certain actions, as contemplated, to certain emotions in the minds of those who contemplate them, cannot, it is evident, have any universality, beyond that of the minds in which these emotions arise. We speak always, therefore, relatively to the constitution of our minds, not to what we might have been constituted to admire, if we had been created by a different being; but to what we are constituted to admire, and what, in our present circumstances approving or disapproving with instant love, or abhorrence, it is impossible for us not to believe to be, in like manner, the objects of approbation or disapprobation, to Him who

has endowed us with feelings so admirably accordant with all those other gracious purposes which we discover in the economy of nature."*

And again: "Virtue is a felt relation to certain emotions, and nothing more, with no other universality, therefore, than that of the minds in which, on the contemplation of the same actions, the same emotions arise. We speak always of what our mind is formed to admire or hate, not of what it might have been formed to estimate differently; and the supposed immutability, therefore, has regard only to the existing constitution of things under that Divine Being, who has formed our social nature as it is, and who, in thus forming it, may be considered as marking his own approbation of that virtue which we love, and his own disapprobation of that vice which he has rendered it impossible for us not to view with indignation or disgust."†

The theories both of Hutcheson and Smith do *really* place the foundation of virtue in the constitution of the mind; it is peculiar, however, to Dr. Brown, as I imagine at least, to avow this. He admits, unless I misunderstand him, that the mind might have been formed capable of approving what it now disapproves. And, had that been the case, vice would not only have appeared virtue, but would really have been virtue; *i. e.* on the principles of this writer, that virtue is the relation of an action, to the feeling of approbation, which it excites. To me, I acknowledge, the opinion that, retaining our relation to God as creatures, and to each other as fellow-creatures, any change in the constitution of the mind could render it right to hate God, and each other, is so

* Vol. III. p. 596. † Vol. III. p. 615.

extravagant, that I know not any thing which could prevail upon me to embrace it.

It has been stated that the theory of Dr. Brown has to encounter objections which are peculiar, either in kind or degree, to itself. Some of these I proceed to mention.

*First,* it supplies us with no adequate cause for the rise of the emotion of approbation, nor, consequently, for the origin of our notions of virtue. The truth of this statement will, it is imagined, be apparent to the reader, when he recollects the account which Dr. Brown has given of the nature of virtue.—Virtue, and vice, he tells us, denote nothing in actions themselves. This is repeated in almost every form of negation. "Virtue is a felt relation, and nothing more." "All that we mean by the moral differences of actions is their tendency to excite one emotion, rather than another." "There is no right nor wrong, virtue nor vice, merit nor demerit, existing independently of the agents who are virtuous or vicious." And, in like manner, he adds, "If there had been no moral emotions to arise on the contemplation of certain actions, there would have been no virtue, vice, merit or demerit, which express only relations to these emotions."*

Now let the reader especially observe that—as virtue is, on this system, nothing more than a relation between a certain action, and a certain emotion,—the notion of virtue cannot arise, till the emotion of approbation has arisen. Nothing surely can be more manifest than this. But, on Dr. Brown's principles, how can the emotion of approbation arise? If virtue be nothing in actions, as is so often stated, how do certain actions originate this emotion? Does

* Vol. IV. p. 175.

it not arise without a cause, unless there be rectitude in the actions themselves—*i. e.* some quality or aptitude in them to awaken it? How can we approve, without approving *something?* If virtue be not some quality in actions which is not universal, how comes it to pass that we approve some actions, and not others? Why do we not approve all actions alike? Or, rather, how is it possible that we should approve any actions, when there is nothing in them, according to this theory, to approve? It is admitted that there can be nothing in any of the odoriferous particles of matter, which resembles our sensations of smell; yet there must be such particles, or we should have no sensations. And when the resulting sensations are different,—when some bodies have a pleasant, and others an offensive odour, there must be a difference in the odoriferous particles emitted by them, or there could be no difference in the sensations which they produce. Dr. Brown's system presents us with an effect without a cause—represents us as approving, but approving nothing. It is not an answer to this statement to say we approve *the action*, because if there is nothing more in one action than in another to excite the emotion of approbation, how comes it to exist at all, or why do not all actions awaken it? If, on the other hand, there is something in one action which does not exist in another, adapted to awaken the feeling, that something is virtue in the action; and the statement of Dr. Brown is overthrown, that virtue is "a relation, and nothing more."

I am not unaware of the way in which Dr. Brown endeavours to extricate himself from the difficulty which has been pressed upon his system. That difficulty is, that as virtue is a mere relation—being *nothing* in actions themselves—the system supplies

us with no adequate cause for the rise of the feeling of approbation—represents it as arising without any thing in the action by which it is awakened to produce it, or virtue would be something in actions. "It is not to moral distinctions," replies the Doctor, "that this objection, if it had any force, would be applicable." And he immediately proceeds to argue that it can have no force, because many other relations, such as equality, proportion, &c., do not signify any thing in the objects themselves to which they are applied, and yet they awaken feelings of equality, &c.—*i. e.* feelings which, according to the line of argument we have taken, have no cause, according to Dr. Brown's statement, in the objects which produce them. A horse passes before us—it is followed by a cow; we are struck with the feeling of their resemblance. Yet the cause of that feeling is not in one, or the other, of the animals, nor in both of them united; it is, says Dr. Brown, in the constitution of our mind, formed by its Maker capable of experiencing the feeling in the circumstances referred to. The application of the argument is as follows;—virtue is nothing in objects, yet it may excite the feelings of which we have been speaking.

In the whole of this reasoning there seems to me a mistake. It appears to identify our notions of virtue with our feelings of approbation produced by virtuous conduct. The question is, "How do our feelings of approbation arise?" Dr. Brown replies by shewing how our notions of virtue arise. Now, conceding to him, for the sake of argument, that virtue is a relation, and that relations do not exist in the object, but in the mind which contemplates them;* it is

* What is the proper notion to be formed of relations, appears to me a most difficult and perplexing subject. I would not be

manifest, on his own principles, that to the rise of a notion of relation, it is necessary that there be the perception, or conception, of two or more objects. It is when the horse and cow are *both* perceived, or thought of, and not when they are perceived, or thought of separately, that the notion of relation arises. It follows, accordingly, from this statement, that if virtue be, as Dr. Brown states, the relation of an action to the feeling of approbation which it excites, the notion of this relation cannot arise in the mind on the contemplation of the action and the feeling separately. They must be viewed simultaneously; *i. e.* the emotion of approbation *must have arisen* before the notion of the relation between the action and the emotion can possibly arise, for they cannot otherwise be viewed simultaneously. Now Dr. Brown's system leaves us utterly in the dark as to the manner in which the *emotion* arises, or rather as to the source from which it springs; unless, indeed, he has identified it with the feeling of relation. And as this feeling depends for its existence upon the previous existence of the emotion, for the previous existence of which the system supplies no adequate cause, I cannot but regard the whole theory as baseless. There is no virtue in actions—nothing, that is, in one action, which does not exist in another, to excite the emotion, (or there would be virtue in the action,) and yet the emotion arises;—a statement which is to me equivalent with the declaration, that there is nothing in a rose to awaken the sensation of fragrance, and yet that the sensation arises.

understood as opposing Dr. Brown's statement; yet I can scarcely accede to it. That *notions* of relations exist in the mind is manifest; but to say that the relations themselves exist in the mind, is, I apprehend, more questionable phraseology.

We have seen that Hutcheson's theory does not necessarily involve the sentiment that right and wrong are not indicative of any thing in actions themselves. Now as some actions awaken emotions of approbation, while others do not, we might have expected to hear Dr. Brown admit the existence of something in those actions which is adapted to awaken them. Such an admission would, however, be adverse to his doctrine, that virtue is a mere relation—a sentiment which lies at the foundation of most of the mistakes, as they appear to me, that Dr. Brown has committed on this subject. It may, then, be worth while to examine this sentiment a little more particularly.

Proceeding on the same principles which have led Dr. Brown to declare that virtue is a mere relation, I would ask, what should forbid us to say of what are usually called the secondary qualities of bodies, as smells, tastes, &c., that they are nothing in the bodies themselves, but mere relations of those bodies to the sensations they produce? If this would be a miserable quibble, as Mr. Stewart says, (because there must be something in the body by which the sensation is produced, though nothing resembling the sensation,) how are we to free the statement of Dr. Brown from a similar charge? Besides, what is meant by the term relation here? What relation do what are called virtuous actions sustain to the emotion they awaken? It can be no other than the relation of antecedence; that is, the actions precede the emotion, or are the cause of it. And if this be the case, they must have a tendency, or aptitude, to produce it; that is, there must be something peculiar to those actions—something in them that does not exist in others—which is adapted to excite the emotion; or why do not all

actions awaken it? And this conducts us to the old conclusion, *viz.* that this something is the virtue of the actions, in opposition to the statement, so often repeated, that virtue is a mere relation.

*Secondly,* If virtue be the mere relation of certain actions to a certain emotion, it would seem to have been constituted without any reason on the part of God. Dr. Brown himself is obliged to admit that actions which are now related to the emotion of approbation, might have stood in a relation exactly the reverse; in which case what is now regarded as virtue would have been vice, and vice itself would have been transformed into virtue. Now if we were not formed to approve an action *because it is right;* but the action *becomes* right by our approving it, what reason can there have been for that particular constitution of mind which our Creator has given to us? Admit, with Mr. Stewart, "that the words right and wrong express qualities of actions,—that when we say an act of justice is right, we assert a truth which is independent of the constitution of our minds;"—and all doubt is removed. What is right, God has formed the mind to *approve,* as what is good, he has formed it to desire. If an action became good by being desired, and right by being approved, which appears to be Dr. Brown's system, what reason, it is again asked, could have induced the Deity to form the mind to approve some actions, and not others? Dr. Brown intimates, indeed, on one occasion, that the actions we approve must be approved by God; and he would, perhaps, argue from that circumstance, that they could not have occupied a relation different from that in which they at present stand to *our* minds. But why *must* they be approved by God? They *must* be approved by

us, because our minds are constituted to approve of them;—a reason which does not apply to God. If they have no rectitude in themselves, *i.e.* as it appears to me, if there is in them nothing to approve, how is it that they awaken approbation in the mind of the Deity? Were it certainly the case, that an action must awaken approbation in the mind of God, *because it excites it in ours*, it would follow, for any thing I can see to the contrary, that an object which excites in our minds the emotion of beauty, must appear beautiful to Jehovah.

And, further, if actions derive their virtue from the constitution of our minds—if virtue be, as it is stated, the mere relation of a certain action to a certain state of the mind—how could there be virtue, any more than beauty, or fragrance, previous to the existence of the mind? What, on this system, is the rectitude of God—that holiness which is ascribed to him by those who are admitted to closer fellowship than we enjoy, and which adorned his character long ere his voice, "Let there be light," broke the silence of eternity? It can manifestly be nothing else than the tendency of certain contemplated actions to awaken the approbation of his own mind. But if certain actions tend to awaken approbation, and others not, must there not be some quality in the former which the latter do not possess, by which the approbation is excited—*i. e.* must there not be virtue in the former, and not in the latter?

If we avail ourselves of Dr. Brown's own statement, that a moral action is, in fact, the moral agent himself, we shall, perhaps, render it more difficult for an advocate of his system to explain what we are to understand by the essential rectitude of the Divine Being. He would seem to be reduced to

the necessity of saying, that the holiness of God is the relation of the Divine character to the Divine approbation.

*Thirdly,* Dr. Brown's theory of morals proceeds on a practical forgetfulness of the distinction which exists, as he himself admits, between what is, and what ought to be, in human conduct. "When we know," says he, "that man has certain affections, and passions, there still remains the great inquiry as to the propriety or impropriety of those passions, and of the conduct to which they lead." To the importance of this admission, reference has been already made. It is, indeed, manifest, that we must either admit that every state of mind, of every human being, is right—and right because it exists;—or that we must seek for some moral rule, by which to try its rectitude. Now Dr. Brown places that standard, as we have seen, not in the law of God, not in any thing exterior to the mind, but in the mind itself, in one of its own states, or affections. Those actions and affections which excite certain emotions of approbation, are right, and right on that account. But are not emotions of approbation affections of the mind? And must we not, accordingly, on his own principles, institute an inquiry concerning their "propriety, or impropriety?" If, with regard to other emotions, it is not enough to know that the mind is susceptible of them, or that, on a certain occasion, they actually exist, why should it be considered enough to know this with reference to the emotions of moral approbation and disapprobation? Since we are not to take it for granted that any other affection is right because it exists, why should we sit down with the assurance that the affection of moral approbation is right, because it exists? It is necessary not only to

have a moral measure of the rectitude of actions, but to be certain of its accuracy. Dr. Brown takes the feelings of approbation and disapprobation as the moral measure of all other affections. The first step in the process, then, on his system, is to prove the accuracy of his measure, and the consequent rectitude of every action which is conformed to it. Now what proof has Dr. Brown of the accuracy of his measure? He does not produce any. Emotions of approbation are affections of mind; but affections of mind are not proved to be right, by his own concession, by their existence. And yet affections of mind, the rectitude of which, on Dr. Brown's own principles, requires to be proved, but of which no proof either is, or can be, given, are the only standard by which other affections are to be tried! It is obvious that the Doctor takes for granted the propriety of the feelings of approbation; and, indeed, that he must do so. And, taking this for granted, the system supplies us with no certain measure of the rectitude of any action, or of any affection of mind whatever. The correctness of the rule not being verified, we can have no confidence in relation to the correctness of any thing that is measured by it. The whole system of morals is thus involved in doubt and uncertainty; and it is impossible, on this scheme, for any man to know, whether he deserves the vengeance, or the love, of his fellow-men.

The charge which has thus been brought against the system of Dr. Brown, is, it is conceived, established. He practically forgets the distinction between that which is, and that which ought to be. We approve of certain actions, and affections; and they are right, because we so approve of them; *i. e.* we gather our knowledge of the rectitude of one affection,

from the existence of another affection. How was it possible for this acute writer to avoid perceiving, that he has no more right to take for granted the rectitude of the feeling of moral approbation, than the rectitude of any other feeling? And that until he has proved the correctness of his measure, or rule, it will be impossible to prove the rectitude of any action, or affection, which is compared with it?

I have dwelt the longer on this point, because the influence of this mistake, as I cannot but deem it, is visible in the whole of his disquisitions on the subject of morals—many of which are of great value, though the oversight to which we now refer is a serious drawback upon their importance. He encounters those who deny that there is any distinction between virtue and vice—those who maintain, with Hobbes, that this distinction is the mere result of political enactment—and especially Hume, and the selfish system, as he denominates it, in the same manner, and on the same principles. We approve certain actions on the instant of contemplating them; they are, therefore, virtuous actions—thus considering what *is*, an infallible measure of what *ought to be*.

I have said that this oversight comes into prominent view in his eloquent attack upon those who rest the foundation of virtue upon utility, either public or private. The current of his reasoning is as follows: We do not approve of an action because it is adapted to promote the good of society; nor because it tends to the benefit of the individual, either in this world or the next. Our approbation is given previously to any calculation of consequences; and, therefore, the tendency of the action, he argues, to promote either public or private benefit, is not that which gives it the character of virtue.

Now I have no doubt that the foregoing account states the fact correctly—that we do approve of actions without any reference to their consequences. Nor do I oppose the sentiment, that actions are not rendered virtuous by their beneficial tendency. But I deny that this is a legitimate conclusion from the premises. For as the approbation of which he speaks is an affection of mind, the question obviously recurs, "Are we right in approving actions without any reference to their tendency or consequences? Is it certainly the case that what we approve is worthy of approbation?" If it be so, how are we to support the correctness of the Doctor's own statement, "that after we know that a man has certain affections, there still remains the great inquiry concerning their propriety or impropriety?" Unless we admit that man is what he ought to be, it is impossible consistently to maintain that any actual feeling whatever, in any case of its occurrence, is right, because it exists. Susceptibilities of feeling, indeed, belonging to the physical nature of man, must be allowed to be what they should be, from the bare fact of their existence. But as mere susceptibilities, *i. e.* capabilities of feeling, they have obviously no moral character whatever. The susceptibilities of experiencing love, hatred, fear, anger, &c. render us capable of becoming virtuous or vicious; but they are themselves neither virtuous nor vicious. It is only when they are developed—or rather to the affections which grow out of them, that a moral character can attach; and as it is admitted, on all hands, that there may be an improper development of all our affections, it is manifest that no particular instance of their development can be proved to be right, by the mere fact of the development itself.

Thus Dr. Brown's system confounds what is, with what ought to be; and it places the foundation of virtue in the arbitrary constitution of the mind. I must not forget to notice the very ingenious manner in which our author attempts to parry the objection which Dr. Price brings, on this account, against the theory of Hutcheson. Dr. Price refers our moral sentiments to reason. There is an eternal and immutable distinction, he says, between right and wrong; and the understanding perceives this, as it perceives the difference between truth and falsehood, &c. This statement, replies Dr. Brown, is exposed to the very same objection with the one for which it is offered as a substitute; since reason is but a principle of our mental frame, like the principle which is the source of moral emotions. "What we term reason is only a brief expression of a number of separate feelings of relation, of which the mind might or might not have been formed to be susceptible, and has no peculiar claim to remain unaltered."*

Now this reply of Dr. Brown would be valid, I apprehend, if the argument of Dr. Price were—a certain action or affection is virtuous, *because we perceive it to be so.* There is no difference, in this point of view, whether we say we perceive, or, with Dr. Brown, we feel an action to be virtuous. If we rest its claim to the praise of rectitude on our judgments, or our emotions, we are confounding what is, with what ought to be; and placing the foundation of rectitude in the arbitrary constitution of our minds. But the argument of Dr. Price is, or was intended to be,—there are moral distinctions in actions; and, therefore, God has rendered the human mind capable

* Vol. IV. p. 179.

of appreciating them. If certain affections and actions appear to the judgment to be right, and if there be no reason to suppose that the view we thus take of them is influenced by the moral infirmity of our nature, there is good reason to *infer* that they are right affections and actions. God cannot be supposed to have given us an erring judgment. The theory of Dr. Brown is very different. He does not *infer* that an action is in itself right, because the mind has been formed to approve it. There is, he says, on the contrary, no virtue in actions. They are virtuous because they are *approved*:—a statement similar to the following declaration on the part of Dr. Price, if he could be supposed to utter such a statement, "Actions are virtuous because they are *perceived* to be so."

*Fourthly*, It is necessarily involved in Dr. Brown's principles, that there might be virtue in a nation of atheists. The denial of the Divine existence does not effect a radical alteration in the mental constitution. The atheist, as well as the theist, feels the emotion of approbation on the contemplation of certain actions. Now, according to the statements of Dr. Brown, to feel morally obliged to perform an action, is to be sensible that we could not neglect it without incurring our own disapprobation, as well as the disapprobation of others; to be virtuous, or to have merit, is to have acted in such a manner as to have obtained this approbation. What is there, then, to render it impossible that an atheist should feel this sort of obligation—should become the subject of virtue, in this sense of the term? obviously nothing. Expunging from his creed altogether the doctrine of the Divine existence, he might yet be strictly virtuous. I know not, indeed, whether this would be denied by Dr. Brown. Certain it is, that, in one of the most

objectionable passages in his whole work, he declares that there may be virtue, where there is no regard to the Divine authority in what we do, nor indeed any thought of the Divine existence. And if there may be virtue where God is forgotten, I see not why it should not exist where his very being is denied. "The question is not," says he, "whether it be virtue to conform our will to that of the Deity, when that will is revealed to us, or clearly implied, for of this there can be no doubt. It is, whether there be not in our nature, a principle of moral obligation, from which our feelings of obligation, virtue, merit, flow, and which operates not independently of the Divine will indeed, for it was the Divine will which implanted in us this very principle,—but without the necessary consideration at the time, of the expression of the Divine will; and consequently without any intentional conformity to it, or disobedience, or which in our obedience itself, as often as we think of the Divine will, is the very principle by which we feel the duty of such conformity. The mother, though she should, at the moment, forget altogether that there is a God in nature, would still turn, with moral horror, from the thought of murdering the little prattler who is sporting on her knee; and who is not more beautiful to her eye by external charms and graces, than beautiful to her heart, by the thousand tendernesses which every day, and almost every hour, is developing; while the child who has, perhaps, scarcely heard that there is a God, or who, at least, is ignorant of any will of God, in conformity with which virtue consists, is still in his very ignorance, developing these moral feelings which are supposed to be inconsistent with such ignorance; and would not have the same feeling of complacency, in repaying the parental caresses

with acts of intentional injury, as when he repays them with expressions of intentional love. Of all the mothers who at this time are exercised, and virtuously exercised, in maternal duties around the cradles of their infants, there is, perhaps, not one who is thinking that God has commanded her to love her offspring, and to perform for them the many offices of love, that are necessary for preserving the lives that are so dear to her. The expression of the Divine will, indeed, not merely gives us new and nobler duties to perform—it gives a new and nobler delight also to the very duties which our nature prompts; but still there are duties which our nature prompts, and the violation of which is felt as moral wrong, even when God is known and worshipped, only as a demon of power, still less benevolent than the very barbarians who howl around his altar in their savage sacrifices."*

I cannot see how it is possible for a Christian moralist to do otherwise than strongly condemn this passage. Why did not the Doctor refer us to the parent brute, guarding her young with manifest tenderness as a specimen of virtue? In what does the mother, supposed by Brown, differ from the brute? Her watching around the cradle of her young, is not the result of any regard to God—not prompted by a sense of duty; but by mere animal affection. "I see not," says one, "on what ground the mere instinctive exercise of these affections, which are common to us with the lower animals, should be dignified with the sacred appellation of virtue. There is virtue in the exercise of our feelings and faculties only when they are intentionally made subservient to the great and ultimate end of our being."

* Vol. IV. pp. 108-9.

On this account, it is said that "the very ploughing of the wicked is sin"—that the "sacrifices of the wicked are abomination to the Lord"—that "they who are in the flesh cannot please God." They do what nature prompts; but to act merely under the promptings of nature, without any intentional conformity to the requirements of duty, will not secure, if we take the New Testament for our guide, the divine approbation; and, therefore, such conduct cannot deserve the sacred appellation of virtue. Scripture morality requires that "whatever we do in word or deed, we should do all in the name of the Lord;"—that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, all should be done to the glory of God.

*Fifthly*, it attaches, as a necessary consequence to the system of Dr. Brown, that the most flagitious actions may, in particular circumstances, not merely lose their turpitude, but become positively virtuous. The moral obligation to abstain from an action, is the feeling that, by committing it, we should forfeit our own approbation, and that of others. The moral obligation to perform an action, is, on the other hand, the feeling that by performing it, we should secure the approbation of both. There is, accordingly, no obligation to perform any action when this feeling, which is the only impelling principle, does not exist. This, indeed, seems to be allowed by Dr. Brown himself. "If there had been no moral emotions to arise on the contemplation of certain actions, there would have been no virtue, vice, merit, or demerit, which express only relations to these emotions." It is true, this statement merely affirms, that if we had not been formed susceptible of moral emotions, there would have been no vice or virtue in the world. But if the emotion constitutes the only binding force—the

only moral obligation to perform an action, what difference does it make, I ask, whether, when an action is contemplated, we are destitute of that emotion by constitutional defect, or through the operation of any other circumstance? If the emotion is not there, the moral obligation is not there. There is nothing to render it a duty to perform the action. It is true, we may have violated duty at a previous step of the process. We may have neglected those measures, which, had they been adopted, would have secured the existence of the emotion at the time referred to. Yet still, as to be morally obliged, on the scheme of Dr. Brown, is to feel that if such an action be neglected, we shall forfeit the approbation of the wise and good, as well as our own, I see not how the conclusion is to be avoided, that there can be no sin in not performing an action, when we do not feel in the manner described. This, however, is not all. It clearly follows, in addition to this, as we have stated, that if any action, however flagitious it may be, be contemplated with an emotion of approbation, the performance of that action becomes a duty. If the approving feeling be there, the moral obligation must be there also. And, in that case, infanticide, and parricide, and theft, are actions not merely to be in certain instances palliated, but morally applauded. It was the absolute duty of Paul to persecute the church of God; for "he verily thought within himself, that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth;" for this conduct, however, he regarded himself as standing in need of mercy. His previous conduct, in neglecting to avail himself of the means of instruction, according to Dr. Brown's principles, may, indeed, have been morally wrong; but the cruelties he practised were morally

same good with virtue, no reason is apparent to me, why it would not become excellent and rewardable. Were virtue to produce the same evil with vice, I see no reason why we should not attribute to it all the odiousness, blame-worthiness, and desert of punishment which we now attribute to sin."

5th, It may be alleged that nothing can render it a duty to do any thing which is contrary to our own welfare, taking the whole of our being into the account. The command of God himself, could we conceive of his issuing a command at variance with our ultimate happiness, must be inoperative, nay, ought to be inoperative, here. The tendency of an action then to promote our happiness, taking the whole of our being into the account, must be that which renders it a duty, or gives to it the character of rectitude.

In proceeding to examine the system which has been briefly detailed, it may be expedient to shew how far we are agreed with its advocates.

1st, It is, then, freely granted, that virtue is characterized by utility—or that virtuous actions are beneficial. It does not, however, follow as a legitimate consequence from this circumstance, that they owe their rectitude to their utility. The subjects of God's moral government sustain various important relations to him, and to each other. Actions which correspond with these relations, are both virtuous and beneficial; and, therefore, though always useful, it is not necessary to suppose that they are virtuous *because they are* useful. When the materialist tells us that sensation and thought must be the properties of a certain system of organized matter, because they invariably accompany it, and are never found but in connexion with it, we meet his assertion with a

negative, on the ground that God may have established a connexion between a certain state of the brain, and the manifestation of vital phænomena, though the organization is not the cause of the phænomena. In like manner, God may have established a connexion between certain actions, and the happiness of mankind, though the tendency of these actions to secure happiness, does not give to them the character of virtue.

2dly, It may be further granted, with reference to many subjects of political enactment, that what is expedient is right. But, it must be remembered that these enactments regard things which are in themselves morally indifferent. The supreme legislature may determine whether a particular tax shall be imposed; but they must not pass an act authorizing theft, or murder. And the rectitude which these decisions give to actions is rather a legal than a moral rectitude; unless, indeed, the conduct they enjoin may be said to derive a moral character from the obligation under which every individual lies, to seek the good of the nation, and to yield obedience to its laws.

3dly, It may also be granted "that cases may arise which may require a particular reference to utility and expediency in order to their determination." Still these concessions do not imply that actions are right, because they are beneficial; all they prove is that, by their being beneficial, we may ascertain them to be right. "Utility may be *a* criterion of virtue, without being *the* criterion; and it might be even *the* criterion, without being the ultimate reason of duty. Did we admit the universality of expediency as a test, it would not prove the action to be right on that account; it would only prove that this was the best or safest rule by which to discover its rectitude."

*Finally,* I am very ready to admit, that nothing could render it our duty to do what would endanger our well-being during the whole extent of our existence. This may result, however, from that which is involved in the ultimate and everlasting loss of well-being. To be eternally miserable, is to be an eternal enemy to God; on this account, nothing should lead us to risk the loss of eternal happiness. We are formed to desire our own happiness—in point of fact, all men actually desire, and pursue, that which they consider likely to promote it. But to say that we *must* pursue it, as a *matter of duty*—that we are *guilty,* as well as imprudent, if this be not our conduct—that no consideration whatever will justify our disregarding it for a season, (and if for a season, why not for ever?) is more than I should choose to maintain. It may, therefore, be allowed that nothing can render it a duty to risk our eternal salvation, without embracing the sentiment, that the tendency of an action to promote our welfare is that which gives it the character of virtue.

In opposition to the theory which founds virtue in utility, I observe,

*First,* that it is at variance with the manner, and circumstances, in which moral emotions arise in the mind. That God has formed us susceptible of such emotions, *i.e.* capable of vividly approving, or disapproving, certain actions and affections, has been conceded to Dr. Brown; while we hesitate, recollecting the moral pravity of our race, to admit that those actions which we approve, are certainly right on that account. Still it must be admitted, that our inquiries into the nature of virtue, will be aided by observing the manner in which the emotions in question arise. For if, in point of fact, they are awakened not by any

view of the utility of the action—if they arise previously to any calculation, or even thought, of its utility, and entirely through the influence of other considerations—and if this rise of the emotions cannot be supposed to be the result of any moral obliquity introduced by sin;—it must, in that case, be admitted that they form correct criteria of virtue. What we actually approve may be regarded, under the limitations suggested above, as indicating what we were originally formed to approve. And if God has not formed us to approve an action on account of its tendency to promote either our benefit, or that of others, we may surely infer that it does not derive its rectitude from its usefulness to ourselves, or others. It is not to be supposed that we have been formed to approve actions which are not right—" or so, as that we do not, and cannot, approve that in them which constitutes their rectitude, but something, on the other hand, which does not constitute it." The question is then one of fact. Do we give our approbation to actions on account of their utility? The inquiry shall be made in reference both to private and public utility.

(1.) Is our approbation given to actions on account of their bearing upon our personal interest, or welfare? That we must reply to this question in the negative, it appears to me impossible to doubt. A seemingly generous man comes prominently forward to the relief of a very deserving individual, who had been reduced to great distress. He delivers him from prison, rescues him from penury, places him in business, opens the way for him to wealth and happiness. We approve and admire his disinterested and distinguished kindness. After the lapse of a short period, however, events occur to induce a suspicion that we have misconceived the motives under the impulse of which he

acted. Circumstances render it but too manifest, that real sympathy with the unfortunate sufferer had little or no influence upon his mind—that he had merely made use of his distress as a foundation on which to build a reputation for splendid liberality. Our feelings of approbation instantly subside. Nay, the obliged individual himself ceases to *approve* the conduct of his benefactor. But, if virtue be the tendency of an action to promote individual benefit, why should he do this? Though he has become more enlightened in relation to the motives of his patron, he still continues to enjoy the substantial benefits of his liberality. The fact is incompatible with the notion that the emotion of approbation is awakened by the tendency of an action to promote individual benefit. "Let us imagine that some human demon, a Nero, a Tiberius, a Caligula, were to shew to any one of us all the kingdoms of the world, and to say, 'All these thou shalt have, if thou wilt but esteem me,'—would our esteem arise at all more readily? Should we feel, in that case, for the guilty offerer of so many means of happiness, a single emotion like that which we feel for the humblest virtue of one, who we know never can be of any aid to our worldly advancement? If a virtuous action be in itself nothing, except as a source of personal gain, why, in such a case as that which I have supposed, does not our heart feel its sentiments of esteem and abhorrence vary with every new accession of happiness which is promised to us? At first, indeed, we may feel a loathing for the tyrant,—not because tyranny is in itself less worthy of approbation than the mildest benevolence,—but because it may be more injurious to our interest. It would require no trifling equivalent; but still, as it is only a quantity of injury which is

dreaded, an equivalent may be found; and, with every new bribe for our esteem, there is of course a nearer approach to this equivalent. Our abhorrence should gradually subside into slight indignation, and this into very slight dislike, and this again, when the bribe is increased, become at length some slight emotion of approbation, which may rise, with the still increasing bribe, through all the stages of love,—through esteem, respect, veneration,—till we feel ultimately for the tyrant, whose power is to us a source of so much happiness, all that devotion of the heart which we so readily yield to power that is exerted for the benefit of mankind. When we labour to think of this progressive transmutation of moral sentiment, while the guilty object of it continues the same, in every respect, but as he offers a greater or less bribe for our affection,—do we not feel, by the inconsistency which strikes us at every supposed stage of the progress, that affection,—the pure affection which loves virtue and hates vice,—is not any thing which could be bought, but by that noble price which is the virtue itself, that is honoured by us; and that to bribe us to love what is viewed by us with horror, or to hate what is viewed by us with tenderness or reverence, is an attempt as hopeless, as it would be to bribe us to regard objects as purple which are yellow, or yellow which are purple? We may indeed agree, by a sacrifice of truth, to call that purple which we see to be yellow, as we may agree, by a still more profligate sacrifice of every noble feeling, to offer to tyranny the homage of our adulation,—to say to the murderer of Thrasia Pætus, 'thou hast done well,'—to the parricide who murdered Agrippina, 'thou hast done more than well.' As every new victim falls, we may lift our voice in still louder flattery. We may

fall at the proud feet,—we may beg as a boon, the honour of kissing that bloody hand which has been lifted against the helpless; we may do more,—we may bring the altar and the sacrifice, and implore the God not to ascend too soon to heaven. This we may do, for this we have the sad remembrance, that beings of a human form, and sons, have done. But this is all which we can do. We can constrain our tongue to be false; our features to bend themselves to the semblance of that passionate adoration which we wish to express; our knees to fall prostrate; but our heart we cannot constrain. There, virtue must still have a voice which is not to be drowned by hymns and acclamations,—there the crimes which we laud as virtues, are crimes still,—and he whom we have made a god is the most contemptible of mankind;—if, indeed, we do not feel perhaps that we are ourselves still more contemptible. When is it, I may ask, that the virtue of any one appears to us most amiable? Is it when it seems attended with every thing that can excite the envy even of the wicked,—with wealth, with power, with all which is commonly termed good fortune; and when, if its influence on our emotions depend on the mere images of enjoyment which it suggests, these may surely be supposed to arise most readily? It is amiable, indeed, even in such circumstances; but how much more interesting is it to us, when it is loaded with afflictions from which it alone can derive happiness? It is Socrates in the prison of whom we think—Aristides in exile,—and perhaps Cato, whatever comparative esteem he might have excited, would have been little more interesting in our eyes than Cæsar himself, if Cæsar had not been a successful usurper."*

* Brown, Vol. IV. p. 70—73.

Should it be said that, in considering the tendency of an action to promote our individual benefit, we must take the whole of our being into the account—and that we are accordingly not entitled to consider any action as virtuous which is not in this highest sense useful; I answer that, even according to this statement, certainly less objectionable than the other, rectitude is only a matter of prudence. The difference between virtue and vice is precisely the same in kind with that which exists between different speculators in the market of commerce, who have employed their capital more or less advantageously in the different bargains that have been offered to them. The individual who chooses the pleasures of sin, in preference to the glories of eternity, acts, it must be admitted, a most unwise and imprudent part; but what more can be said of his conduct? To charge him with blame, in acting so imprudently, is to utter words without meaning. The language implies that there is a distinction between what is right, and what is prudent, which the sentiment I am opposing denies. We regard what is called a prudent man, and a virtuous man, with very different feelings, and our emotions of moral approbation are only given to the latter. It is of no consequence in this point of view whether the individual be prudent for time or eternity. Could we conceive of a person abstaining from all sin, and doing all that the law of God requires, and influenced at the same time by no conviction of duty, by no sense of obligation to God, by no regard to his glory—but by the mere instinctive desire of securing his own happiness, we should follow him, I imagine, through his whole course on earth, and see him enter heaven at last, were it possible for such a man to gain admission there, without a single plaudit of approbation.

Our emotions of approbation are not then, in point of fact, awakened by the bearing of actions upon our individual benefit. Now, if man were what he ought to be, this circumstance would supply decisive proof that actions do not derive their virtue from private utility. He is not, however, what he ought to be; he is a depraved being. Yet the rise of the emotion, previous to any thought of the consequences of the action approved, does not seem to be the result of depravity. It cannot, indeed, be supposed for a moment to be so. We may, therefore, fairly conclude that the moral emotions of which we speak are developments of an original susceptibility of mind. And if God has not formed the mind to approve an action on account of its private utility, it follows, according to our previous reasoning, that it is not approvable on that account,—or, in other words, that virtue is not founded in private utility.

(2.) Is it true that our approbation is given to actions on account of their general utility? It appears to me that Dr. Brown has supported the negation of this position with a power of argument not to be shaken. Our consciousness, if we appeal to it, will tell us, that admiration, not moral approbation, is awakened by what is merely beneficial. If any one should doubt this, I would ask him how he can otherwise explain the fact, that intelligent agents are exclusively approved? Utility is to be found not in the actions of voluntary agents alone, but in inanimate matter. A ship, a steam-engine, a printing-press, have contributed a far greater amount to the happiness of the world, than any single action of any human being. Why then do we not approve of and morally respect these inventions? Why do we not regard "a chest of drawers," to use the illustration

of Dr. Smith, with the same feelings with which we contemplate the conduct of the Christian? That we do not is indisputable. The emotions which are produced by what is useful, and what is morally good, are feelings as different as any two feelings which are not absolutely opposite; and if we class them as the same, we may with as much reason class as the same our moral veneration, and our sensation of fragrance, because they are both pleasing. If virtue, however, be founded in utility, it is indisputable that a man of virtue, and a chest of drawers, ought to be regarded with exactly the same feelings. The only way of escaping from this consequence is to tell us, that it is only utility in certain voluntary actions of living beings that awakens approbation. The reply of Brown is triumphant. "Does he not perceive, however, that in making this limitation, he has conceded the very point in question? He admits, that the actions of men are not valued merely as being useful, in which case they must have ranked in virtue with all things that are useful, exactly according to their place in the scale of utility,—but for something which may be useful, or rather which is useful, yet which merely as useful, never could have excited the feelings which it excites when considered as a voluntary choice of good. He admits an approvableness then, peculiar to living and voluntary agents, a capacity of exciting certain vivid moral emotions, which are not commensurable with any utility, since no accession of mere utility could produce them. In short, he admits every thing for which the assertor of the peculiar and essential distinctions of virtue contends; and all which he gains by his verbal distinction of utilities is, that his admission of the doctrine which he professes to oppose, is tacit only, not open and direct." The

cause of the mistake, which identifies utility and virtue, has been referred to already, and is thus well stated by a late writer:—"That there is a close connexion between virtue and happiness, so close that without it the universe would become a splendid mansion of misery, is not to be doubted; and it is chiefly because this connexion is felt and observed by all, that certain writers have been led to maintain, that virtue solely consists in utility, or in its tendency to happiness, and that the law by which we are to regulate our conduct is to be found in what appears to us to be conducive to happiness. They have been led to embrace this opinion with the greater confidence, that they have observed how much its truth holds in regard to men invested with public offices and public trust. Men in such circumstances are, doubtless, bound to act for the good of the community. But they are bound so to act, because it is their duty to love their neighbours as themselves, to respect the rights of others as they do their own, and, consequently, to promote their happiness to the extent of their power and opportunity."*

In consequence of this connexion between virtue and utility, we approve of actions which tend to general happiness. The important question, however, says Dr. Brown, is, whether the specific amount of utility, be that which we have in view, in the approbation we give to certain actions,—whether we love the generosity of our benefactor with an emotion exactly the same in kind, however different it may be in degree, as that with which we love the bank bill, or the estate which he may have given us. This he very justly denies. Were it the case that our approbation is founded on utility, is it not manifest that the con-

* Dewar, Vol. II. p. 44.

sequences of an action must be present to our view, before we could approve it? This, however, is not the case. "Who is there," says Brown, "that in the contemplation of Thermopylæ, and of the virtues that have made that desolate spot for ever sacred to us, can think of Leonidas and his little band without any emotion of reverence, till the thought occur, how useful it must be to nations to have rulers so intrepid! Our admiration is not so tardy a calculator. It is instant in all its fervor." To the same effect adds another writer:—"We approve or disapprove of actions, however, not because of their tendency to happiness, or the contrary, but in consequence of the moral constitution of our nature; which constitution, as God is its author, we are to regard as furnishing an expression of his will. How few of mankind ever think, or have ever thought, of the relation between virtue and happiness! Do we not give our admiration to the virtuous patriot, to the benefactors of our race who have loved their race more than their own ease or lives, before we have considered the good which they were instrumental in conferring? Would not the noble career of Howard procure for him a place in the grateful affections of every human heart, irrespectively of the consequences which are to flow from it, and before these consequences had been placed in the view of the mind? He who has formed us in his own image has not rendered it necessary for us to observe relations, and to estimate tendencies and effects, previously to our approving of an action as right, or of disapproving of it as wrong; and being conscious that we love virtue and hate vice without reference to consequences, merely because they are virtue and vice, we justly infer, that it is not on account of their consequences that virtue is lovely and

vice hateful, that the one produces the emotion of approbation and the other of disapprobation."*

The amount of the preceding statement is, that as God has not formed us to approve actions on account of their general utility, they are not virtuous, or approvable on that account. The statement does not forget, but, on the contrary, proceeds on a careful remembrance of the important distinction which exists between what is, and what ought to be. Our susceptibilities of moral emotion are exactly what they ought to be, because they constitute an original and essential part of our moral nature. With reference to the developments of these susceptibilities—or actual emotions of approbation—it must be conceded that they also are what they ought to be, unless it can be shewn that, in any particular instance, the feeling of approbation may be the result of that injury which our moral nature has sustained through the entrance of sin. We have seen that though what is virtuous is also useful, it is not approved *because* it is useful—that the emotion arises, in innumerable instances, previously to any consideration of consequences. Now as the rise of the emotion cannot be ascribed to the moral obliquity of our nature, it may be regarded as marking what is, and what is not, virtue.

Before I leave this part of the subject, I would observe that our actual emotions of approbation, constitute a more accurate criterion of virtue (I say criterion, because if man were what he ought to be, they would merely supply a rule—they would not exhibit the foundation of virtue) than my argument has hitherto rendered it necessary for me to assume. I cannot, indeed, allow that they are an infallible

* Dewar, Vol. II. pp. 45-6.

standard, because the moral infirmity of our nature affects the development of all our susceptibilities, though it has extinguished none, and created none. Yet, perhaps, the feelings of moral approbation, and disapprobation, are less affected by it than almost any other. The heart is sometimes sadly polluted, while the moral faculties retain a considerable portion at least of their primitive rectitude. There is an important distinction between the approbation of the judgment and conscience, and the approbation of the heart. The number is not small of those who approve the good, while they follow that which is evil. The Gentiles, in the days of the Apostles, polluted as were their hearts, and detestable as was their conduct, were yet a law to themselves—" their consciences accused, or excused one another." It is the last item in the charge of the inspired writer against those who held the truth in unrighteousness, that they not only did those things which they knew to be worthy of death, but had pleasure in them that did them. Even this, however, intends rather that they loved their company, than that they approved their conduct. In further opposition to this theory of virtue, I observe,

*Secondly*, that it cannot be reconciled with the principle on which the practice of moral duties is enforced upon us in the Sacred Scriptures. It has been justly remarked, "that whatever theory be assumed, that man who has the most entire regard to the principle that constitutes moral obligation, possesses the greatest degree of virtue." If virtue derive its very character and existence from legislative enactment, he who is most generally and exclusively influenced by the authority of the law of his country, has the greatest share of virtue. On the same ground, if moral rectitude be the tendency of an

action to promote our individual benefit, or the welfare of society at large, the palm of superior moral excellence must be given to him who pays the most exclusive regard to his own interest, or the general good, as his system ought to lead him. Let it be once conceded that virtue has its foundation in private utility, and it will necessarily follow that the man who throws away all concern about the welfare of his fellow-creatures—who looks at nothing, and thinks of nothing, and pursues nothing, but his own private interests—sacrificing the interests of others, and the glory of God, if they appear to him to stand in his way, and forgetting them when they do not—is the individual who is the most entitled to the approbation of his fellow-men! Who can believe it? Or, let it be granted that virtue is founded in public, rather than private utility, and "*mutatis mutandis*," similar consequences will unavoidably follow.

Now it needs but a cursory inspection of the records of divine truth, to discover that this is not the ultimate ground, or reason, on which practical religion is enforced upon us by the Sacred Writers. Instead of commanding us whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, to aim at the promotion of public or private benefit, their language is, "do all to the glory of God." A regard to the approbation and to the honour of the Most High, is uniformly represented as the highest motive—the most powerful consideration by which a rightly-disposed mind can be influenced. And though inferior motives do frequently operate, and, on account of their moral weight, are sometimes appealed to, yet the general statements of the Sacred Volume render it indisputable that a man rises in the scale of moral excellence, in proportion as self is annihilated, and as he manifests an habitual regard

to that motive by which the Deity himself is influenced in the whole of his works.

If virtue had its foundation either in public or private utility, there could be nothing evil which tends to good. What then is the meaning of the prohibition, "not to do evil, that good may come?" The language is perfectly unintelligible, except on the supposition, that the rectitude, and expedience, of an action, are entirely distinct things; and that, though what is right may be generally expedient, there are cases of exception. In this passage we are commanded to keep rectitude, not expedience, in view—a command utterly incompatible with that account of the nature of virtue upon which we are now animadverting. The observation of Paley on this command, affords a striking proof of the baneful influence of the system of expediency; "for the most part," says he, "a salutary caution!" How different from the language of Paul! How different from his manly and spirited conclusion, "Let God be true, and every man a liar."

The preceding discussion was commenced with the general statement, that Rectitude is some actual quality in actions. It becomes now essential to give a more distinct and explicit explanation of that which is conceived to constitute its real nature, than it was necessary, or even proper, to do in encountering the various systems to which the attention of the reader has been directed. I observe, accordingly,

V. That virtue, as it regards man, is the conformity or harmony of his affections and actions with the various relations in which he has been placed—of which conformity the perfect intellect of God, guided in its exercise by his infinitely holy nature, is the only infallible judge.

*We sustain various relations to God himself.* He is our Creator—our Preserver—our Benefactor—our Governor. "He is the framer of our bodies, and the father of our spirits." He sustains us "by the word of his power;" for, as we are necessarily dependent beings, our continued existence is a kind of prolonged creation. We owe all that we possess to him; and our future blessings must flow from his kindness. Now there are obviously certain affections and actions which harmonize or correspond with these relations. To love and obey God manifestly befit our relation to him as that great Being from whom our existence as well as all our comforts flow. He who showers his blessings upon us ought to possess our affections; he who formed us has a right to our obedience. It is not stated merely, let it be observed, that it is impossible to contemplate our relation to God without perceiving that we are morally bound to love and obey him (though that is a truth of great importance); for I do not consent to the propriety of the representation, that virtue depends either upon our perceptions or our feelings. There is a real harmony between the relations in which we stand to God, and the feelings and conduct to which reference has been made; and, therefore, the human mind has been formed capable of perceiving and feeling it.

*We sustain various relations to each other.* God has formed "of one blood, all the families of the earth." Mutual love and brotherly kindness, the fruit of love, are required by this relation—they harmonize or correspond with it. We are children; we are loved, and guarded, and supported, and tended with unwearied assiduity by our parents. Filial affection and filial obedience are demanded by this relation; no other state of mind, no other conduct, will harmonize with it.

We are, perhaps, on the other hand, parents. Instrumentally at least we have imparted existence to our children; they depend on us for protection, support, &c.; and to render that support is required by the relation we bear to them. It is, however, needless to specify the various relations in which we stand to each other. With reference to all, I again say, that they necessarily involve obligations to certain states of mind, and certain modes of conduct, as harmonizing with the relations; and that rectitude is the conformity of the character and conduct of an individual with the relations in which he stands to the beings by whom he is surrounded.

It is by no means certain to me that this harmony between the actions and the relations of a moral agent, is not what we are to understand by that "conformity to the fitness of things," in which some writers have made the essence of virtue to consist. Against this doctrine, it has been objected that it is indefinite, if not absurd; because, as it is alleged, it represents an action as right and fit, without stating what it is fit for—an absurdity as great, says the objector, as it would be to say that "the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal without adding to one another, or to any other angle." Dr. Brown also, in arguing against this doctrine, says, "there must be a principle of moral regard, independent of reason, or reason may in vain see a thousand fitnesses, and a thousand truths; and would be warmed with the same lively emotions of indignation, against an inaccurate time-piece, or an error in arithmetic calculation, as against the wretch who robbed, by every fraud that could elude the law, those who had already little of which they could be deprived, that he might riot a little more luxuriously,

while the helpless, whom he had plundered, were starving around him." Now why may we not say, in answer to the former objector, that the conformity of an action with the relations of the agent, is the fitness for which Clarke contends? And why may not we reply to Dr. Brown, that—allowing, as we do, the necessity of that susceptibility of moral emotion for which he contends—the emotion of approbation which arises on the contemplation of a virtuous action, is not the virtue of the action, nor the perception of its accordance with the relations of the agent, BUT THE ACCORDANCE ITSELF? "That a being," says Dewar, "endowed with certain powers, is bound to love and obey the Creator and Preserver of all, is truth, whether I perceive it or no; and we cannot perceive it possible that it can ever be reversed."

All the relations to which reference has been made, are, in one sense, arbitrary. Our existence as creatures is to be ascribed to the mere good pleasure of God. The relations which bind society together, the conjugal, parental, filial relation, depend entirely upon the sovereign will of Him who gave us our being; but the conduct to which these relations oblige us, is by no means arbitrary. Having determined to constitute the relations, HE could not but enjoin upon us the conduct which his word prescribes. He was under no obligation to create us at all; but having given us existence, he could not fail to command us to love and obey him. There is a harmony between these relations, and these duties,—a harmony which is not only perceived by us—for to state that merely, would seem to make our perceptions the rule, if not the foundation, of duty,—but which is perceived by the perfect intellect of God himself. And since the relations we sustain were constituted by God,

since he is the judge of the affections and conduct which harmonize with these relations—*that which appears right to Him, being right on that account—Rectitude may be regarded as conformity to the moral nature of God, the ultimate standard of virtue.*

The preceding account of the nature of rectitude is different from that of Dr. Price, and, it is hoped, more consistent and intelligible. In his elaborate work on Morals, this writer maintains that there is an essential and eternal distinction between right and wrong—a statement which I, of course, have no desire to controvert, as it merely declares, in other terms, that an essential difference exists between what God is, and what he is not. But the writings of Dr. Price supply us with no standard of virtue, except that which is afforded by the moral faculties of man; or, if they attempt to carry us beyond this rule, they are so abstract, or so dark, as to render it difficult to comprehend them. The Doctor commences his dissertation, by stating that "the terms right and wrong, denote what actions are"—"real characters of actions, &c.—and not mere sensations derived from the particular frame and structure of our natures." He proceeds to shew, that the understanding is the source of new ideas, in opposition to Locke, who affirms that all our ideas are derived from sensation, and reflection. He explains the difference which he conceives to exist between what he calls "Sense," and "Understanding;" meaning by the former of the terms, the faculty or power of sensation. According to his statement of this difference, it is the same with that which Mr. Stewart attempts, as we have seen, to establish between the sensations which are received through the medium of the organs of sense, and the simple notions,

of various kinds, which are formed by the mind, on the occasion of the existence of these sensations. "The understanding," says Dr. Price, "forms the ideas of necessity, infinity, contingency, possibility, power, causation, &c.;" he adds, also, "of right and wrong." Thus ideas of right and wrong, are, as he considers, necessary perceptions of the understanding, and morality is a branch of necessary truth.

Now before I proceed to state more fully the objection against this system, at which I have already hinted, the reader is requested to notice that, in the language which the Doctor employs, there is the appearance, at least, of identifying our perceptions of right and wrong, with the right and wrong perceived. I am aware, indeed, that statements are to be found in his volume, which would seem to render it impossible to suppose that such a mistake can have been committed. And, perhaps, when his mind was particularly directed to the point, the distinction between our *ideas* of right, and *rectitude* itself, did not escape his notice. I cannot but think, however, that the two things were habitually identified. How otherwise could he think of saying, that right and wrong may denote what we *understand* and *know* concerning certain objects—that they are expressive of simple and undefinable *ideas*?* How otherwise could it have happened, that he has failed to tell us what rectitude in actions is? Declaring, as he does, that it is a real character of actions—that it is perceived by the understanding—and that every act of perception supposes something to be perceived, we naturally expect to find him proceeding to show, not merely *how* our *notions* of rectitude arise, but what is the *nature of rectitude*

* Vide pp. 59, 60.

itself. Certain it is, however, that he does nothing of the kind. He traces our notions of virtue to what he considers their source; he tells us that they are necessary perceptions of the understanding; but he says nothing *of that which is perceived,* i. e. of rectitude itself. His argument seems to be, "We perceive a distinction between right and wrong, and, therefore, morality is eternal and immutable.

Now I shall not dwell upon the objection against this doctrine, which is justly retorted by Dr. Brown, *viz.* that it as truly represents virtue to be dependent upon the arbitrary constitution of the mind, as any of the schemes which it rejects. For what in reality is the argument of Dr. Price, but the following? We *perceive* a difference between virtue and vice,—and, therefore, there is a difference—a difference eternal and immutable. And if such be the amount of the argument, why may we not say, with Dr. Brown, "We *feel* a difference between virtue and vice, and, therefore, there is a difference?" Reason is but a principle of our mental frame, like the principle which is the source of our moral emotions. Why, therefore, should the former be regarded as an infallible guide, and the latter not?

Not to dwell upon this, however, it is manifest that, since the Doctor does not state in what rectitude consists, his system presents us with no standard of virtue, except that which is supplied by those perceptions of right and wrong, of which we have so frequently spoken. These perceptions, as it appears to me, take the same place, and perform the same office, with the moral emotions of Dr. Brown. On this account, I prefer the statements of the nature of rectitude which have been given in the preceding pages. Those statements declare that moral distinctions are eternal and

already stated,—"But it may still be urged, that these observations remove not the difficulty, but rather strengthen it. We are still left to conceive of certain objects distinct from Deity, which are necessary and independent; and on which too his existence and attributes are founded; and without which we cannot so much as form any idea of them. I answer," he adds, "we ought to distinguish between the will of God, and his nature. It by no means follows, because they are independent of his will, that they are also independent of his nature. To conceive thus of them would indeed involve us in the greatest inconsistencies. Wherever, or in whatever objects necessity and infinity occur to our thoughts, the divine eternal nature is to be acknowledged. We shall," he adds, "I believe, be more willing to own this, when we have attentively considered, what abstract truth and possibility are. Our thoughts are here lost in an unfathomable abyss, where we find room for an everlasting progress, and where the very notion of arriving at a point beyond which there is nothing farther, implies a contradiction. There is a proper infinity of ideal objects and verities possible to be known; and of systems, worlds, and scenes of being, perception, order, and art, wholly inconceivable to finite minds, possible to exist. This infinity of truth and possibility we cannot in thought destroy. Do what we will, it always returns upon us. Every thought and every idea of every mind, every kind of agency and power, and every degree of intellectual improvement and pre-eminence amongst all reasonable beings, imply its necessary and unchangeable existence. Can this be any thing besides the divine, uncreated, infinite reason and power, from whence all other reason and power are derived, offering themselves to our minds, and forcing

us to see and acknowledge them?—What is the true conclusion from such considerations, but that there is an incomprehensible first wisdom, knowledge, and power, necessarily existing, which contain in themselves all things, from which all things sprung, and upon which all things depend? There is nothing so intimate with us, and one with our natures, as God. He is included, as appears, in all our conceptions, and necessary to all the operations of our minds: nor could he be necessarily existent, were not this true of him. For it is implied in the idea of necessary existence, that it is fundamental to all other existence, and pre-supposed in every notion we can frame of every thing. In short, it seems very plain, that truth having always a reference to mind, infinite eternal truth implies an infinite eternal mind: and that, not being itself a substance, nor yet nothing, it must be a mode of a substance, or the essential wisdom and intelligence of the one necessary Being."*

All this may be both true and important, but I am constrained to think that it conveys no distinct idea. The assertions, that "there is an infinity of truth and possibility which we cannot destroy"—that "this infinity is the divine uncreated infinite reason and power"—that "the incomprehensible first wisdom, knowledge, and power, contain in themselves all things"—that "eternal truth, not being a substance, nor yet nothing, must be the mode of a substance, or the essential wisdom and intelligence of the one necessary being," appear to me very much like the statements of Dr. Clarke with reference to space and duration, which have puzzled many more than they have enlightened and convinced. As far as I can

* Price, p. 140—142.

understand the preceding declarations, they seem to make our perceptions the revealers to us of the character of God, if not the rule and measure of that character. Certain views of rectitude are necessarily formed by the understanding—that rectitude, which the mind thus perceives, is eternal, and immutable; *i. e.* it constitutes the moral nature of God—"for wherever necessity and infinity occur to our thoughts, the divine eternal nature is to be acknowledged." Now what is this but saying that the human mind, by its unaided efforts, may attain to the knowledge of God? Who can avoid perceiving that the whole is greater than its parts, or that two and two make four? If we have an intuition of right and wrong, and if the rectitude we thus perceive be the nature of God, who can be ignorant of Him? It may be proper to ascertain, before we embrace this sentiment, how far it can be reconciled with an authority to which all should bow, and by which we are assured "that the world by wisdom knew not God"—and that "it is impossible to find him out to perfection."

It is, of course, admitted that we have perceptions of right and wrong; and, it is further conceded, that had the moral state of man remained unaltered, since he came from the hands of his Maker, these perceptions might have constituted a perfect criterion of virtue. But as this is not the case—as the views we take of objects of a moral nature are greatly affected by the state of the heart, which is declared to be "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,"—it is denied that our perceptions of right and wrong can be safely relied upon as constituting a correct and perfect measure, or revealer to us of the divine character. We must have a more infallible standard of rectitude than either our perceptions or our feelings.

That standard we have placed in the divine intellect, guided in its exercise by his perfectly holy nature. Doubtless there is embodied in the character of God all that we can conceive of moral excellence; yet I would rather say that his character is excellent, because it is his character, than because it appears excellent to us. This is the ultimate measure which cannot itself, for that very reason, be measured. The virtue of man is conformity to the relations he sustains; of this conformity the perfect intellect of God is the only infallible judge;—and as His intellect is guided in its exercise by his perfectly holy nature, those affections and actions which appear right to God, are right on that very account.

### WHAT IS THE STANDARD OF RECTITUDE?

It was formerly stated that the two questions "What is the Foundation of Virtue?"—and "What is the Standard of Virtue?" are not so radically distinct as is sometimes imagined. And the conclusion, at which we have at length arrived, shews the correctness of this statement; since it teaches us that the holy nature of God, guiding the perceptions of his perfect intellect, is both the foundation and the standard of virtue.

The question then, upon the consideration of which we are about to enter, manifestly resolves itself into an inquiry with reference to the Revelation, or Revelations, which God has given to us of himself. We know nothing of God but what he has revealed to us; that Revelation, then, must be the standard of Rectitude, by exhibiting to us his perfect and glorious nature. The inquiry which presents itself, then, is, "Where is this revelation to be found?" To this question, I answer,

*First*, in the material creation. "The heavens declare the glory of God." "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power, and Godhead." The visible and tangible Universe is, then, a revelation of God—an exhibition of the standard of rectitude; though, it may be, not so bright and luminous an exhibition, as that to which we shall shortly advert. It is, on various accounts, important to recollect this. We sometimes hear it asserted, that the works of nature do not teach us any thing of God—and that reason has nothing to do in matters of religion. It may be possible, perhaps, to attach a meaning to the latter assertion, against which no great exception can be taken; yet it is often ignorantly made, and is adapted to lead into very great and deplorable mistakes. The words, understood in their obvious sense, are so far from being true, that it is by the aid of reason we arrive at the knowledge of the fundamental truth of all religion, *viz.* the Divine Existence. We see marks of contrivance in the universe; we immediately conclude that there must have been a contriver. But this is a deduction of reason. Discard the use of reason, and we shall be constrained to surrender our confidence in the being of a God. Should it be said, in reply, that the existence of God is affirmed in his word; I would ask, how we know that this word merits our confidence—that it is the word of God—that the Scriptures were, indeed, given by inspiration of God? Is it not by the aid of reason? Should it be further said, that the character of Jehovah, as drawn by the inspired penmen, approves itself to us, as being a true description of Him in whom we live and move; and thus establishes the Divinity of

the Bible; I admit the truth of the remark, while I ask, if it be not to our reason, that this character approves itself. Let us, then, be careful not to misunderstand the statement, that reason has nothing to do in matters of religion. If we are determined to extinguish the light of nature—or rather to affirm that there is no such thing—to place no confidence in the decisions of reason, we must surrender our faith in divine revelation, admit that we are left without any moral guide whatever, and abandon ourselves to an universal scepticism.

There is a broad line of distinction between the denial that any of the decisions of reason may be relied upon with confidence, and that it may be trusted as a safe and infallible guide in reference to our conduct, in all the relations we sustain to God, and to each other. The latter denial must be made, unless we are prepared to maintain that reason has suffered no eclipse through the lapse of the species. Granting the scripture doctrine of the fall, it follows,

*Secondly,* That we must seek for a revelation of God in the Scriptures of truth. There we have that bright and luminous exhibition of the Divine character, to which reference was made a short time ago; and to which we shall do well to take heed, as "unto a lamp shining in a dark place." It is necessarily implied in the fact, that the Bible came from God, that it presents us with a more full and perfect manifestation of his character, than can be derived from any other source—or why was it given? Jehovah does nothing in vain. Did he not intend to unveil to us more of his glorious character than is laid open to our view in the material universe, we cannot conceive that what is emphatically called Divine Revelation,

would have been given to the world. And, if the Bible does present us with a more full development of the Divine character than the external and visible universe, it must be a more perfect character of rectitude. It must, indeed, be absolutely perfect as far as it professes to be our guide; because it came from God. Whether there be any minute points of Christian duty to which the directions of the Sacred Scriptures do not reach, it is not necessary, for our present purpose, to consider. The oracle might be allowed to be in some cases silent, but, where it speaks, it must be infallible in its directions. It must demand and deserve the most implicit obedience. And if this be all that is meant by the assertion formerly referred to, that reason has nothing to do in matters of religion, I cordially admit its truth and importance. Having examined the claims of the Bible to be a revelation from God; having subjected the evidence by which this important fact is sought to be established, to the test of those rules by which the value and credibility of evidence is, in all cases, tried, and found it to be sufficient and convincing; I agree with Dr. Chalmers in thinking, that the question then is, "not, What thinkest thou? but, How readest thou?" I am disposed to concede that the apparent reasonableness, or unreasonableness, of any doctrine which is manifestly revealed, does not supply a legitimate ground either of reception or rejection. I would grant to the Roman Catholic that we are not justified in rejecting the doctrine of transubstantiation itself, on the ground of its apparent absurdity. The exclusive inquiry concerning this, and every other sentiment, ought to be the following—Is it the doctrine of Scripture? If that be the case, it must be true. I would not, however, be understood as affirming that reason is to be totally

excluded even here; since it is only by the upright use of this faculty that we can ascertain the meaning of Scripture. All that is intended is, that the divine authority of the Bible being established, the sole office of reason is to ascertain the meaning of its communications; and not to sit in judgment upon the reasonableness of those doctrines which are clearly shewn to constitute integral parts of that communication. I am aware of the reply which will be attempted here; *viz.* that, as we admitted the divine authority of the Bible, because the evidence on which it rested its claims to be a communication from God, appeared to our reason to be conclusive, we are warranted in rejecting any doctrine which appears to us irrational. I reply, that I would by no means affirm, that that circumstance does not call upon us to examine afresh whether the meaning of the record may not have been mistaken, nor even whether the evidence on which we have received the Bible, as a revelation from God, be really impregnable. But when we have done this—when, after a careful and devout examination of Scripture, we see conclusive evidence that the doctrine in question forms an integral part of what is unquestionably a revelation from God—we have nothing to do but to believe it. Any *apparent* mystery, or unreasonableness, or want of agreement with the analogy of faith, does not form a legitimate ground of rejection. We have indeed, in this stage of the business, nothing to do with any such questions. "We must not abridge the sovereignty of the principle—what readest thou? by appealing to others, by talking of the reasonableness of the doctrine, or the standard of orthodoxy (that is, as additional grounds for receiving it), and thus in fact bring down the Bible from the high place to which it is entitled, as the only

tribunal to which the appeal should be made, or from which the decision should be looked for."

The preceding statements, representing the Bible as the standard, are borne out by every thing contained in the Sacred Volume itself. The Bible is an authoritative communication of truth and duty. It prefaces its discoveries with, "Thus saith the Lord." Must not then its doctrines be received—its precepts obeyed? In other words, are we not morally obliged to take the Sacred Volume as the standard of rectitude, both as it regards sentiment and practice? That the question of expediency may be taken into the account, when endeavouring to ascertain, in difficult and perplexing cases, the path of duty, has been allowed. But I believe fewer cases than is sometimes imagined will arise, which are not provided for in the Sacred Volume, either by specific or general directions. The more familiar we are with its contents, and the more deeply we are imbued with its spirit, the less shall we find ourselves at a loss in reference to the path of duty. Doubt and hesitation, are, I suspect, generally to be ascribed to ignorance or inattention.

I cannot bring myself to oppose, formally and at length, the notion that expediency is the standard of rectitude. That a Christian moralist—a man who professes to believe that the Bible is a revelation from God, or, in other words, that He has condescended to teach us, in his word, what is truth and duty—should depart from this rule, and adopt that of expediency, or any other, in preference to it, is to me, I acknowledge, passing strange. There is, I apprehend, far less absurdity in erecting the Scriptures into a standard of rectitude, while we maintain that expediency, either general or particular, is its foundation: or, in other words, in maintaining that an action is right, because

it tends to individual or public benefit: while we contend that the best way to ascertain the tendency of actions is to inquire what are commanded, and what are condemned, in the Sacred Volume.

The preceding statements render it unnecessary to enter into the question, By what principle of our nature is it that we attain to the knowledge of right and wrong? The sentiments we entertain with regard to the nature of virtue, must guide our opinions on this point. If virtue be the conformity of an action with the relations of the agent, the discovery of that relation is manifestly the office of reason. If the standard of virtue be the word of God, by what principle of our nature but reason, are we to arrive at the knowledge of its meaning?

If virtue, on the other hand, be the relation of an action to a certain emotion, it is not by the intellectual part of our nature at all, that we gain an acquaintance with it. The rise of the emotion is the only criterion of virtue; our susceptibility of moral emotion, is that part of our nature by which we attain to the knowledge of right and wrong.

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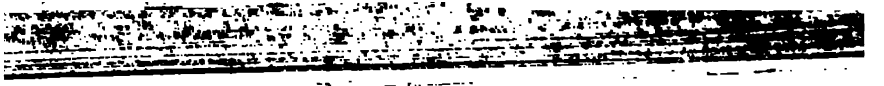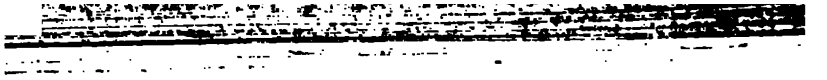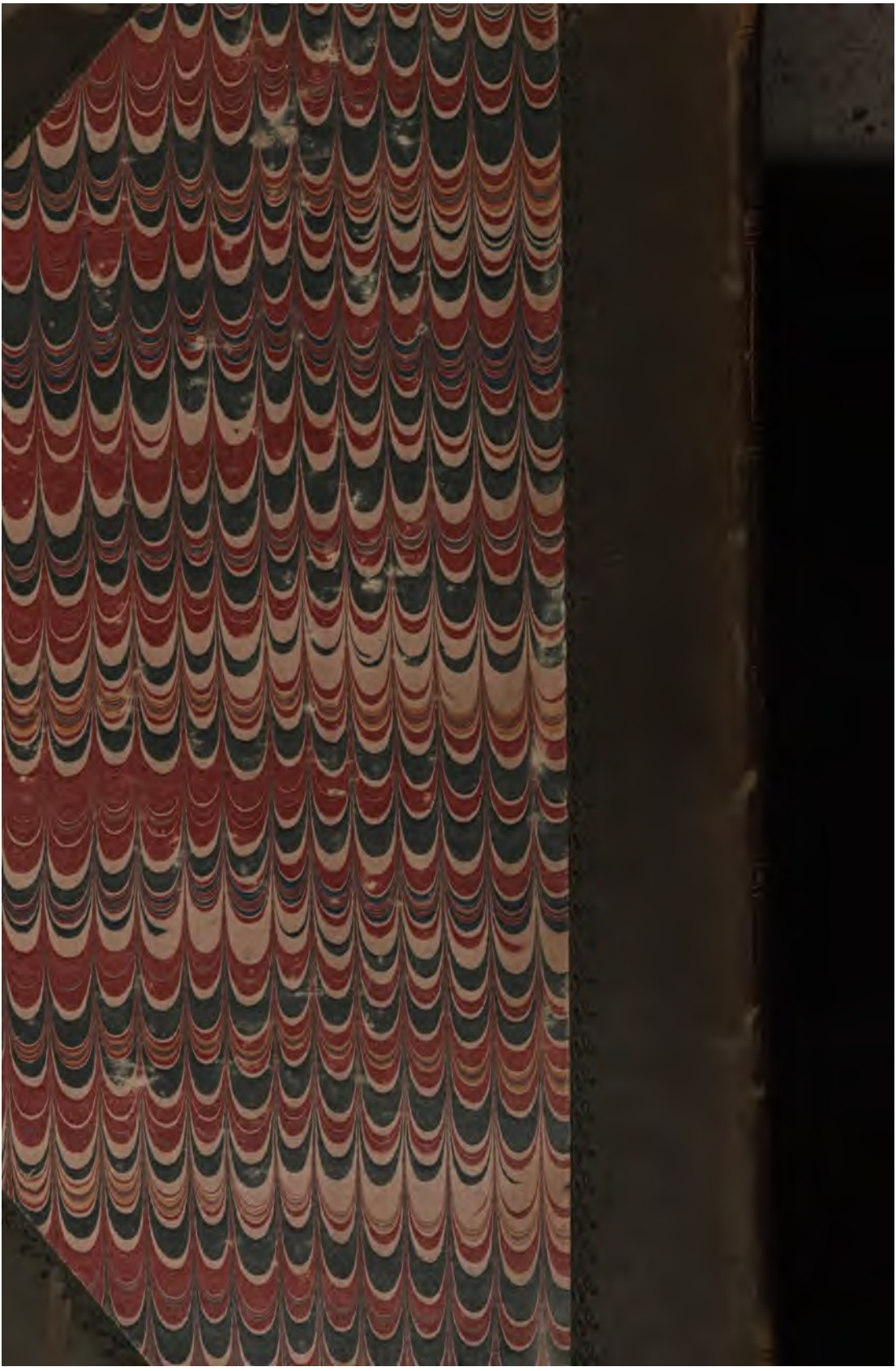
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